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NEW STATESMAN
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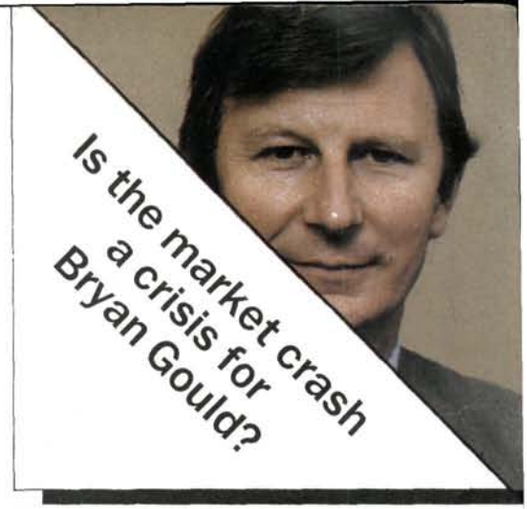
- Gays and the Lord
- *Glasnost* glitches
- Naomi Mitchison in Africa
- Pimlott on policy review
- Street Fighting Years
- Hamletmachine



Is the market crash a crisis for Bryan Gould?

With or without an INF deal . . .

NUCLEAR WAR STARTS AT SEA

Cover photo: TRH Pictures

'Advocates of the maritime strategy ask us to believe that, once a conflict goes nuclear, it can be controlled and stopped. They ask the impossible'

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NEW STATESMAN

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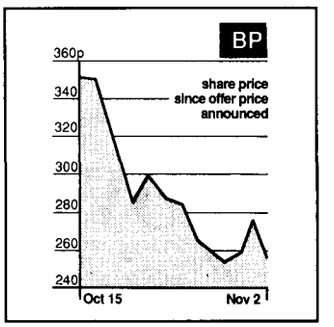
NEW NS EDITOR

Stuart Weir has been appointed editor of the *New Statesman* and will take over later this month. Stuart is a former deputy editor of *New Society* and was editor of *New Socialist*

Taming the monopolies



MONEY, not ideology, has always been behind the government's privatisation drive. But the 5 million absentees from the BP sale who shunned what initially promised to be the time-honoured handout confirms what even the government privately recognised — that the fad of wider share ownership would dry up with the stream of cut-price privatisations *or* the death of the bull market, whichever came first.

The Tories are no ideologists: only after the privatisation bandwagon had started rolling did they hitch libertarian thoughts of wider share ownership up front. Until 1984, the notion of a share owning democracy was no more than flimsy. That year marked the privatisation of British Telecom, when the government, afraid that institutional investors might not digest the flotation, was worried into wooing ordinary folk on a grand scale. Only with hindsight do the subsequent privatisations, employee share schemes, and tax incentives for investors, give the air of a coherent programme.

The Chancellor had (still has?) two theories to justify the encouragement of wider share ownership as a means for cutting the government's borrowing requirement. The first, libertarian one is that individuals who own shares will thereby participate more fully in the enterprise culture so close to the Conservative heart (hence the Chancellor's glee that there are now more shareholders than signed-up trade unionists).

The second point is that individuals, who are likely to trade their shares less frequently than pension funds, would relieve the pressure on management to produce short-term results. Consequently, the share price of companies owned by a large number of private investors would be less volatile. But in three weeks' stock market turmoil, privatisation issues have proved no less resilient: several are now standing below their issue price. Moreover, many managers agree with Sir John Reed, TSB's chairman, that keeping small shareholders informed is a waste of time and money.

Here Mr Lawson is on shaky ground. True, the number of people who own shares has trebled to 9 million since the Tories came to power. But although the value of shares owned by individuals has risen strongly, the value owned by institutions has risen faster. That is because individuals still hold tiny numbers of shares — three-quarters own shares only in privatisation issues.

And then there are few signs of willing participation by this new tribe of shareholders in the companies they own. First-day premiums tempted many into selling. One-third of those allocated shares in British Airways have since flown. Nine-tenths of the original shareholders in Amersham International, the government's first full privatisation, are no more.

Those shareholders that remain loyal have taken little interest in companies' management. Those that do, participate for reasons other than ensuring that management maximises profits. The 4,000 private shareholders who appeared at British Telecom's annual general meeting wore their consumer caps to complain about Britain's most unpopular company. That was their only chance of being heard.

This unease with a once-public utility scotches another catechism of Tory thinking — the 'fallibility of government' principle (already discredited by the government in the economic sphere, witness its Keynesian handling of the world stock market crash). The doctrine runs that companies work — and can be regulated — more efficiently in the privately sector than in the public.

To date, however, freeing corporations from the bonds of the state has first involved a good degree of state tinkering — to ensure their continued monopoly. The Civil Aviation Authority's recommendation that British Airways be shorn of several of its routes brought howls of protest. So off it went to market in its near-monopoly state to fetch a higher price, and then bid, under the banner of patriotism, for British Caledonian, its only national rival.

Even many Tories maintain that Thatcherite zeal could be better applied to natural monopolies from inside the state, than outside it. So selling off the water and electricity industries will stretch the government's ill-conceived principles to the limit. Mr Cecil Parkinson, the energy secretary, has already warned that the elecricity industry will have to become more profitably competitive before it is split up and sold off.

The issue now is over stricter regulatory control of private sector monopolies. Professor Brian Carsberg, the head of Oftel, bemoans that his is a watchhound with few teeth. For instance, he could do little to prevent BT from stopping its Quality of Service reports after privatisation. Ofgas does not handle complaints at all - that is left to the separate National Gas Consumers' Council, which only 6 per cent of gas-users have heard of. Such bodies cannot be shored up without a stronger and clearer definition of the powers of the Office of Fair Trading and the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. That is where the public interest, and Labour's opportunity, lies.

Dominic Ziegler

The author is a staff writer for the Economist.

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DIARY

Gaborone

Back in Botswana, delightfully welcomed by airport staff, then by my Chief — Kgosi Linchwe of the Bakgatla — then by everyone in Mochudi. So I have to start thinking again about tribalism and custom. Chief Linchwe must develop the good side and change the bad and has more power to do this than any politician. Maybe I see the problem of changing custom all the better as a Scot, also entangled in changes of custom.

I came here first in 1963, just before the drought of the '60s, far worse because there was little organised help. We tried at least to feed the school-children, but had to watch the babies die. Cattle dead on the paths, too thin for eating. This year, though, is the fifth of a long drought, but broken here and there mostly by violent rain or hail, the ground too hard-baked to swallow it so that devastating floods leave not a drop behind. Home at the Chief's house, the beautiful morula trees half dead, the great rocks naked and alarming seen through bare bushes. Only round the house a few flowers which Kathie keeps going from washing-up, the water itself pumped up from deep boreholes servicing the standpipes all over Mochudi where people wait with jars and buckets.

Now there are good dinners for all school-children and clinics, porridge or beans with plenty of dried milk from the EEC milk lake. Many cattle are in fair shape, but the donkeys die, though the scavenging goats always get by. Famine relief employment everywhere. Nobody starving and nobody in government with dirty hands.

○

In the early morning to my favourite look-out place, remembering good years pushing through thick grass and flowers; the branches of the fig tree now almost bare. The wide spread of Mochudi eastward towards the border with South Africa, brown dust, bare rocks, houses with no friendly trees or gardens. Tin roofs of houses and school and shops shine harshly. It used to be beautiful, with white-painted rondavels under cool thatching, lovely to sit under. But the nearest thatching grass is hundreds of miles away. Some more important grass comes in great bales from the north-west of Botswana where the rivers are still running; lorry loads for any horses or cattle for those who can afford it; few in Mochudi.

○

I go the rounds of the primary schools, including Segale where I used to do question and answer with Standard Seven. Those were the days before automatic promotion, which now means that children, pushed up every year, can find themselves facing the final exam with little hope and little understanding of English, taught after Standard Three. No teacher really approves of automatic promotion. Who does? Primary education is free and compulsory. A splendid government intention, but with classes of around 60, not entirely realistic, except that it includes school meals. Where the teachers were away, probably standing in for someone else, children at their little tables were working away quietly — rather different from what one expects in an unguarded classroom.

More schools are being built, but will they catch up with a population which is expanding rapidly, although birth control is official and many avail themselves of it? Aids may be the answer: the government is dithering about it, not wanting to start a panic, but . . .? Probably the best bet is genuine sex instruction, such as takes place during initiation.

○

My tribe, the Bakgatla, is the only one still practising the raising of the mephato, the 'regiments'. Kathie, the Chief's wife, and a few other competent and concerned women, see this as the right place to talk to the girls, explaining the meanings of the old songs, which stress virginity and the delights of a good marriage. The old words and metaphors need skilled interpreters. Meanwhile the circumcision of the boys in their mephato, now done in hospital, is the moment to catch disease or injury.

The missions effectively stopped the mephato in most tribes and the government of Botswana is consistently anti-tribal, as in most of the newer African countries. They prefer more dangerous nationalism and the freedom and wisdom of businessmen and lawyers, rather than the tribal councillors and the chiefs.

○

Today I have been dancing, out of breath, with my own mophato, encouraged by huge pots of home-brew and the meat from a cow which Linchwe killed for us and which they and their friends get through very quickly. In the dancing there was hope of rain. Down at the garage we met Angela running everything as usual, with her five daughters, all in bouncing spirits. Their village, Bokaa, only a few miles away, had some hours of soft rain. Here only black, threatening clouds blowing over but unwilling to give.

This should be plowing time, but the ground is impossibly hard and plough oxen are in bad condition. The able and dedicated Minister of Agriculture has arranged subsidies for hired tractor ploughing, though inevitably this leads to some cheating by tractor owners — perhaps from across the border.

Not all politicians are as genuinely concerned. Few, if any, of the members of the elected national assembly hold 'surgeries' for their constituents. They are too busy with their own farms and herds at weekends. It is different for a chief who lives, as it were, in the middle of his constituency. Our Linchwe goes down every morning to his office; people come for advice and help, often on family matters, inheritance, quarrels, accusations, sometimes informal, sometimes in court. Often simply to greet him because he means continuity.

○

Today he has called a kgotla meeting to decide on changes in custom which bears hardly on a widow's inheritance. Several hundred people there, many women with wool caps and shopping bags. The Chief speaks first, pointing out the injustice to women. Others follow, mostly to change the custom, including one woman member of the elected council, her blanket swinging. The audience don't respond, but listen carefully. Linchwe, who chairs, keeps it lively and the crowd ripples with comment. Probably this begins the change. He has been carefully eroding ancient unfairness and ugliness for many years.

○

Gaborone, capital of Botswana, where I go to talk at the university, is totally changed in 20 years. It is almost an industrial town, though without primary industry, so still very dependent on South Africa. Also a prettily architected parliament building, masses of government offices, radio, British Council and the best bookshop in southern Africa, as well as a hatful of problems. It has spread for miles, gulping up the old tribal villages. I go back to one of the old, totally squalid squatter areas, now with the same tenants, divided into small plots with decent little concrete-brick houses, held on a secure local franchise. Some even had started gardens and there was one street lamp. Here are many of the voters for the opposition party, BNF, constantly attacked by the government as dangerous communists because the leader, Ken Koma, has a habit of quoting Marx. Botswana should be proud of being even a slightly unreal democracy, perhaps the only one in Africa, with an opposition party, however feeble. It should be worrying more, and perhaps is, about its total dependence on South Africa, from which it must get most of the materials for its own industries, as well as the food for a population unable to break the heat-baked ground to plough.

Naomi Mitchison

ROGER WODDIS

A Song for Russia

(After Mikhail Gorbachev's speech to the Supreme Soviet to mark the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution)

Mikhail rocked them on the floor —
Perestroika!
Stalin blew it long before —
Perestroika!

Glasnost now reveals the crimes —
Perestroika!
But we're still behind the times —
Perestroika!

If the bureaucrats resist —
Perestroika!
We shall slap them on the wrist —
Perestroika!

Lenin said it long ago —
Perestroika!
Not too fast and not too slow —
Perestroika!

Twenty million Russian dead —
Perestroika!
Now it's time to move ahead —
Perestroika!

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BEN PIMLOTT

Clarifying the mind and disciplining the appetite

NEARLY FIVE months after its second worst election defeat since the war, Labour has set up its new policy review — arranged in seven committees each with a worthily innocuous name (People at Work, and so on). These seven committees are to be convened by 14 of the sanest and brainiest NEC and Shadow Cabinet members the Movement can muster. Bravo. But what does it all mean? What is 'policy', when you are out of power and not responsible for it, and what is 'review'?

Since most of the convenors (not to mention the Leader himself) have as little direct experience of policy as you, me or the much-maligned comrades in Chesterfield the weekend before last, these are fair questions, which are unlikely to get the attention they deserve. But whatever the official definitions, one thing is important. The policy review must not take place in an atmosphere of panic. If one of its most laudable aims is the systematic demolition of totems and icons, a temptation to be avoided is the conclusion, born of fear, that because the Tories have won three elections in a row they are in closer communion with public opinion.

This point is made in the latest volume of the survey-based annual, *British Social Attitudes*.[1] 'The 1980s may be the decade of Mrs Thatcher,' concludes one of the authors, psephologist John Curtice, 'but it has not so far been a decade of popular "Thatcherism".' Curtice's opinion, which flies in the face of conventional wisdom, is worth examining.

The received view — accepted by commentators of all persuasions, and the cause of natural anxiety in the Labour Party — is that the Thatcherite campaign has been as effective in capturing hearts and minds as at transforming the institutions and economic character of Britain. Indeed, the new Tory ethic (social Darwin replacing social Keynes) has allegedly taken so powerful a grip that no political party seeking power in the late twentieth century can afford to ignore it, or — if elected — deny the necessity of working within its confines.

THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of what some have called the Thatcher consensus has had a number of consequences. One has been to lead Conservative politicians, encouraged by the belief that their philosophy is now the dominant one, into ever more reactionary experiments. Another has been to make Labour leaders speak of 'not turning the clock back', and to place special emphasis on what they see as the changed aspirations of the working class. Much of the motive force behind the present policy review is that much of what Mrs Thatcher has done is irreversible because it is irreversibly popular.

Perhaps they are partly right. Yet *British Social Attitudes* provides a solitary reminder that the most obvious explanation for something is not necessarily the correct one. True, there have been many polls showing the popularity of particular Tory views, and the unpopularity of Labour ones. But — says Curtice — these do not account for the Tories' 1987 success. Indeed, so far from accepting that June 1987 demonstrated a long-term shift in electoral opinion on fundamental issues to the right, Curtice suggests the opposite. His evidence indicates, first, a shift to the left during the initial two years of the last parliament; and, second, that there was no subsequent compensating movement back again in attitudes (as opposed merely to voting intentions) to account for Mrs Thatcher's still substantial majority in 1987. When the election came, people voted Conservative in large numbers, but not for reasons that suggest that Tory attitudes on issues are becoming more entrenched.

The actual reason, he concludes, had far more to do with the state of their bank balances and their rosy view of future prospects, than with any conversion to a new political religion. Of course, the two might be combined. His verdict is that they are not. On the contrary, it is possible to see that 'a governing party can appeal successfully to voters whose values are different from their own, on the basis of improving economic indications . . . We thus may have a clue as to why the Conservative Party won the June 1987 election even when the electorate had been moving away from it ideologically'. This is more than an inspired hunch. Curtice shows that there was a sharp improvement in the evaluation by voters of the economic situation: at the time of his survey, people had become more optimistic about inflation, unemployment and their own household incomes.

Because the *British Social Attitudes* fieldwork was conducted in 1986, when Labour was winning Fulham, and not in 1987, when it was losing Greenwich, its verdict must be treated with caution. Nevertheless the perception that the extent of the Tory victory was a paradox, and not as others had encouraged us to believe the consequence of a deep-seated change in values, is consistent with observation of previous general election results.

'If people have confidence in the overall prospects for the economy, and especially if there has been an overall improvement in their own standard of living,' says Curtice, 'they are more likely to be sympathetic to the governing party and to vote for it.' Who has ever doubted this proposition, which accords with common sense? Thus — in the days before Toryism was elevated to a religion — the 1959 Conservative win was attributed not to the final triumph of the doctrine of Macmillanism, but to rising incomes and a feeling of prosperity, summed up by the crudely non-philosophical Tory slogan, 'You've never had it so good'. Curtice's conclusion also, of course, fits the geographical distribution of Tory success in 1987, when the Conservatives did well in the most flourishing regions, but suffered sharp reverses where damage to industry and employment had been most extreme.

If Curtice is right, and the scale of the Tory victory had more to do with the simple fact of economic recovery than with popular conversion, there are implications for the policy review. First, much less of Labour's traditional programme may be an electoral liability than many people had come to accept. Second, the Party, while mindful of electoral opinion, need not regard it as a primary duty to chase after what it supposes public attitudes to have now become. Thus, the Cutrice evidence might help to turn the review from a punishment into an opportunity.

For this to happen, the present review will have to be different from all the others. In the past, policy groups have met, talked, talked some more, co-opted experts who have written papers which have occasionally been read. Then, when time began to run out, somebody has written a report. Few, if any, of the participants have given the process their full-time attention. The trouble with this method is that the incentive to be safe and facile is strong. Perhaps, instead of relying on committees, the convenors would do best to farm much of the detailed work out, commissioning wide-ranging studies first and leaving the political discussion to last.

WHAT MATTERS most, however, if not the method employed in the review but the spirit in which it is conducted. If 1983 was the year of utopias and 1987 the year of caution, the aim should be to make 1992 the year of adventure. 'Labour's 1987 election manifesto had two striking features,' Charles Leadbeater points out in a thoughtful new Fabian pamphlet, 'the elegant width of its margins, and the vagueness of the accompanying text'.[2] The problem, however, lies elsewhere. What a programme requires is not precision or a shopping list but a coherent analysis in which its authors actually believe.

Labour's 1945 manifesto, *Let Us Face The Future*, was little more than a collection of slogans. On the other hand, the ideas that lay behind it — on economics, health and social welfare — had been most carefully worked out, and those who fought the election had a consequent sense of their superiority.

In these still desperate political times, there is a desire for a panacea, a philosopher's stone that will turn failure and frustration into victory. The policy review cannot provide one. Its possibilities are more modest, and cannot be separated from discussions outside the Labour Party. Certainly, brighter, smarter, more voter-directed policies will be of little value unless they are the product of a new understanding. The proper ambition of the review should be educational rather than prescriptive, helping the Labour Party by, in R. H. Tawney's words, 'clarifying its mind, disciplining its appetites, and training for a tough wrestle with established power and property.'[3] That is a more urgent task than making the product palatable to a fickle electorate whose preferences may change several times over the next four years. □

1. R. Jowell, S. Witherspoon and L. Brook, *British Social Attitudes: The 1987 Report*, Gower.
2. C. Leadbeater, *The politics of prosperity*, Fabian Tract 523.
3. 'The Choice Before the Labour Party', *Political Quarterly*, 1932.

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'We need to feel the pain'

Internal dissent against Mikhail Gorbachev's Perestroika *builds: last week, it was revealed that Boris Yeltsin, the reforming Moscow party boss, had offered his resignation after a semi-public confrontation with Gorbachev's more conservative No. 2, Yegor Ligachev.*

The strains in reconstructing Soviet society will grow steadily greater as Gorbachev's plans move out of the committee rooms into plants and offices. In this interview, adapted from the current issue of Detente *magazine,* Otto Latsis, *deputy director of the Central Committee's journal* Kommunist, *tells* Detente *editor* Jeff Gleisner *about the problems facing the implementation of the Enterprise Laws passed by the Committee earlier this year — laws which are designed to herald a revolution in the Soviet economy.*

JG: Your restructuring has arrived at a critical stage, politically speaking.

OL: Actual restructuring will start in 1988. Until now there have only been individual experiments and also some general measures, but these are not far reaching; merely purging changes which slightly improve the old mechanism but do not inaugurate the new nor replace the old.

We have to change the pricing system and especially we must improve the pricing of foodstuffs. The market is totally distorted at the moment because the price structure has not changed for 40 to 50 years and present levels of consumption are in no way reflected by it. This price structure meets the requirements of generalised poverty such as low meat and fruit consumption, a great housing shortage and certainly none of our contemporary household technology.

Recently there have been a whole series of articles on prices in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* and *Moscow News.* These showed that even educated people do not even begin to understand the essence of the problem. They do not grasp the social function of low prices. They see these as protecting the interests of the low-paid, but this is not at all correct.

In Sverdlovsk and Novosibirsk, for example, you will find meat, but only in co-operative shops, at a price of not two or four but six or eight roubles. There is no meat for two roubles in state shops. It may be obtainable through the factory, using the factory order for speculation and this is a distorted distribution system. This distorted system involves workers trading for themselves as speculators, through the state orders. It is the highly paid workers trading for themselves as speculators. The ordinary person thinks like this: 'Well I'll stand in a queue when I have to, and maybe I'll pick some up cheaply or else I won't bother.' This is a delusion, however. There is no cheap meat. The average person on a low wage goes to the co-operative shop to obtain meat, or to the bazaar and so the low earners pay more for their meat than the high earners.

All this will be explained and opened up for discussion, as was also stated at the Plenum. We intend to think up a system of compensation, for we must not simply raise prices, we must also increase wages and pensions so that, in real terms, incomes do not fall. But all this is new and strange to us since nothing like it has been introduced for decades. This is why there are misgivings and conceptual difficulties which always accompany such social and psychological upheavals. The misunderstanding, apprehension and even disagreement concerning restructuring is not merely the concern of a few bureaucrats; it is a mass concern that disturbs everyone. Furthermore there are those who do not wish to work hard.

JG: What about psychological and ideological obstacles?

OL: In the consciousness of the people socialism is primarily a structure which guarantees social safeguards. We have no unemployed, starving or homeless people. Everyone is equally provided for, as is right and proper. Under socialism free education and health care must be guaranteed, or else it is not socialism. Together with this conception of socialism people also retain the idea of the socialist state as the old-style overlord so that if someone has some profit or capital they seek to gain something at the expense of distribution. Yet the State possesses nothing save that which we create. People imagine the State as someone with great resources amounting to tens of billions at their disposal, but they forget that by itself the State has nothing. All it has is what it takes from us and gives out to us and nothing else besides. Morever, that which is distributed to us first must be produced at the expense of distribution.

In working for society we are working for ourselves. This is the basic advantage of socialism. Not everyone understands this. Even educated people such as economists sometimes consider that the basic advantage is the planned economy. In my view a planned economy is an advantage in production but we do not have a monopoly in planning; there are planned economies in capitalist countries. It may be a different sort of planned economy and it may differ for many reasons but capitalists are also able to plan. This was even to be seen in the nineteenth century and is not a startling discovery.

There is a stereotype in the minds of the masses: socialism is planned, capitalism is anarchic. Once you have planning everything is alright. But what about the quality of the plan? Is it any good? Does it express our interests? Has it been fulfilled? Can we fulfil it? At the present time we are convinced that no, not everything is alright.

We must be motivated by interest. No plan will help if I am not interested. But why should I be interested? Because I am working for myself. I need to really see that if I work harder, the factory profits are greater and I have a better life. This connection must be visible to all.

This is the fundamental concept and reform which strenghtens the very basis of socialism because it includes both sides of the issue. So if I work badly, if the enterprise makes less profit, then my life will be the worse for it, maybe even the enterprise will go into liquidation if the collective were to work really badly. We are very unaccustomed to such ideas. We are used to the fact that, whatever happens, the State will bail you out.

JG: How does the concept of state property figure as a criterion of socialism?

OL: Actually this is rather a new question and I am not properly prepared to speak on it. You see, this is the key question, the fundamental point which determines how socialism is different to any other structure: socialism and public ownership of the means of production. Here again the question arises of what is public ownership. If an act is passed which says that from now on there are no more capitalists and that factories belong to the people, as embodied by the state or the co-operative, this does not achieve socialisation.

This subject was being discussed as early as 1918 when the Left Communists said that we must socialise as quickly as possible. Lenin said, however, that nationalisation does not mean the same as socialisation. If you announce that property belongs to the state, yet the state does not really possess, organise or manage that property then it is not socialised. In this way a division arises between official and actual socialisation; between legal socialisation and socialisation. We see that socialisation is not only a long process but that it also needs to be repeated when new conditions occur. Therefore, although property may already be socialised and will remain so in the official and legal sense, there may be a new upsurge in *real* socialisation to stop the subordination of society to the state.

JG: So there is room for various types of ownership within socialism?

OL: There is indeed. Alongside the state primarily

DETENTE

"Russia must realise a new ideal, a new form of life, a neo-Christian life, which is not based on the idea of abundance, but on prayer-like adoration of the world, on an ethic of brotherhood, on sacrifice . . ."3

1— Icon 2 — Russian 'militarist'
3— Part of exclusive interview with Alexander Prokhanov, from current double issue of Detente, £2.50 from Nick Lampert, CREES, University of Birmingham, PO Box 363, Birmingham B15 2TT, or telephone 0532 4131751 extension 6413, and selected central London bookshops

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there must be co-operative ownership. However, the very understanding of state ownership must be more complex. How are we implementing it? This is why talks are being held in many different countries, collectives and enterprises to discuss the role of the state as proprietor and the collective or enterprise as the owner who really implements public ownership.

While public ownership remains a somewhat abstract concept the average person has no feeling towards this property: it belongs to no one, not to me, not to a capitalist, not to anyone at all. You can not look after it or try to increase it since it is valueless: everything is free of charge. This way of thinking is very dangerous as it leads to irresponsibility and lack of discipline.

We also have to consider the rights of workers' collectives who are already assuming ownership. This, the self-financing of workers' collectives, will probably be the most central issue since it applies to many categories in the all-important Enterprise Act.

The new law puts collectives in charge of their profits which was not the case before. These profits form the central core which stimulates and implements the whole mechanism. Everything the collective produces is accumulated there and everything it loses is deducted from there. Anything that may improve the standard of living depends on this profit. Therefore the management of these profits and the ability to increase them becomes the major concern of the economic life of a workers' collective. This is how the Act is intended to work but we will have to wait and see what happens in practice. This, however, is the general idea and the way in which the right to ownership is being enacted under the present conditions.

Now we have something real to maintain whereas before we only had abstract ideas. But how does it work in practice? Let us imagine that I am a factory worker. At the level of my factory, when we collect together to elect a director, I can say: this one is no good, he will not make a profit, so let's choose another. We can decide how to divide up the profits: how much for construction, how much for bonuses and how we shall develop the factory. This is real participation. This is how the right to ownership becomes a reality which I can touch with my hands. Moreover the factory also becomes important to me and is not merely my place of work. If the factory were to go into liquidation I would be given another job but I would have lost the profit which I built up and created over the years with my own hands, by my own labour. I am sorry to leave the factory, even though there is no unemployment, because I was an owner. Under such conditions the human factor will work positively. The worker is sorry when something is lost, stolen or burnt. From being nobody's property it becomes my own.

JG: What difficulties do you think the new economic mechanism is likely to encounter?

OL: It is hard to be sure about this point. I think that there are two things. Firstly we must create a balanced market because at present there is no balance between money and commodities. There is too much spare money both in the population and enterprises. Price reform is one answer, but of course not just price reform alone. Wholesale trade cannot function under such an imbalanced system. One of our principal tasks is to make the rouble worth something. Individual people and enterprises must be made to feel that the rouble is worth having. At the moment roubles are too easy to obtain and do not represent purchasing power. The new system will not work under such conditions. This is the first major problem. The second is very difficult to predict but I am uncertain whether the old ministerial apparatus will function under the new conditions. I tend to think that it will not be adequate.

All State Distribution Committee branches have to be radically altered and I do not think that anyone knows how this will happen. There is no consensus of opinion. People have to be convinced that the present administrative apparatus will not work. The decision to change the economic mechanism has already been taken. The administrative mechanism, however, is not set to change.

JG: You said that there is not a full understanding of what the Enterprise Act will mean. Can you specify?

OL: At the moment our system of priorities says that first workers are paid, then payments into the budget and finally partners and suppliers are to be paid. So an enterprise can be absolutely unviable, not make a loss, pay nothing to their suppliers, yet the workers still receive their wages.

These workers may work badly but they will still be paid. On this point there has always been a so-called socialist principle which says that the worker is never guilty. He may not do any work but nonetheless the director and all those who are really responsible for the bad performance of the factory will say that is not the fault of the workers, nor that of the director but that it is the ministry's fault: they miscalculated the contents of the plan.

Or else it is blamed on the State Supply Committee because they didn't ensure that deliveries were made. They are not just protecting themselves from the workers. They are also avoiding having to answer to the Ministry of Supply. So long as the workers receive their wages no one will find out that mistakes have been made and that the factory is in fact performing badly.

In the very worst instances the supplier or

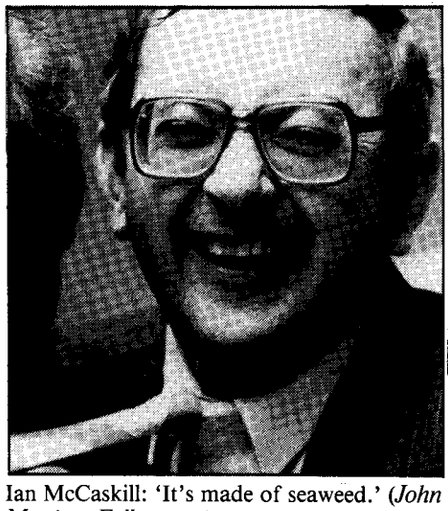
Cont'd on p.8

If the caption fits

No 42

The Royal Couple on their recent Blind Date in Berlin. Are they planning what they'll tell Cilla when they get back? Or is she reminding him who she is? Has he lost his place in the script? Captions or bubbles (speech or thought) to reach the *NS* by Monday 9 November. Lucky winner gets a £10 book token.

Winner: No 40



Ian McCaskill: 'It's made of seaweed.' (*John Marriott, Folkestone.*)

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enterprise who was not paid on time will write a complaint to someone at the ministry, but more often than not this does not happen as the supplier will also receive state support and the wages will be paid if they run out of money. So they have nothing to worry about either.

You can imagine the present system as a person who does not feel pain. In medical terms this is very dangerous and such a disease exists. It can prove fatal because pain signals are essential. Pain signals trouble. We need to know when something has bitten us or if we are poisoned or burnt. If the factory collective has become permanently insensitive to pain then it may be functioning badly but nobody will feel a twinge.

Yet we call this an achievement! We have protected the workers and they are immune to the pain. At the moment our factory workers are content to continue like this, but if it carries on forever in every branch of the economy we will naturally all lose out in the end. ●

Detente *is published quarterly from the University of Birmingham's Centre for Russian and East European Studies, PO Box 363, Birmingham B15 2TT.*

Unions for service

THE RECENT STORMS show how much we rely on our local authorities, and how quickly and ably they respond to such emergencies. There will be many who will be relieved that the job of cleaning up after the storm was not put out to tender — though I'm surprised that no one in the government suggested it.

They, after all, will be responsible for another storm which will be blowing around the council halls themselves. Their answer to the growing crisis facing local authorities that find themselves caught between communities that need and demand better services, and a government that has continually attacked and eroded local autonomy, is simply to mount another attack. The new Local Government Bill promises more privatisation and more compulsory tendering of services currently provided by local councils.

Our response is quite different. It has to be. We are seeking to provide a forum for debate. We are holding a special conference on improving local services in London on 10 November. And because — again, unlike the government — we do not believe that we have a monopoly of wisdom on this topic, we have sought to ensure that the debate is as wide-ranging as possible.

The National Consumer Council, the Policy Studies Institute, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, and the Association of Direct Labour Organisations, are among the bodies that have joined with the trade unions and the TUC to participate in this conference.

It is vital that council leaders and council workers, providers and consumers, consultants, academics, and trade union representatives be involved. We need to examine the record of privatisation to date; we need to consider, for example, whether patients have really benefited from four years of compulsory tendering in the NHS. We need to look at what the government's new bill will mean for the inner cities, and at whether it is a further threat to local democracy. *Nor can we shrink from examining the way that the trade union movement has tackled privatisation and how we are facing up to the challenge of improving services.*

Local services and local democracy are among our citizens' first line of defence against hardship. More than that, they are the bedrock of our national democracy. Defending them and strengthening them should be one of our highest priorities, and I am sure that this conference will make a major contribution to this.

I only hope the government will listen to its conclusions. They could learn something.

Norman Willis

Norman Willis is General Secretary of the TUC

Mothers are a girl's worst friend

LITTLE GIRLS should learn how to cook meals and iron clothes. Boys, who are naturally more macho and imaginative, use sink taps as guns and pots and pans as helmets. And if there's a dispute over toys in the nursery — well the boys will always win — won't they?

Not sexist cliché from the past: a team from the University of Ulster came to exactly these conclusions. They spent four months observing children between the ages of four and seven at play in nurseries and schools in Northern Ireland. Their report makes depressing reading.

The boys controlled the greater area of the playground, forcing the girls on to the edges. They monopolised all the most popular toys which ranged from bicycles to sandpits. According to the report, 'The toys which the boys appear to gain disproportionate access to are the ones which absorb children for long periods and which help them to experiment with a range of intellectual strategies.' The researchers found that boys are getting a better chance to develop manipulative skills, some of which have a strong spatial component — skills which later will be important in many aspects of mathematics, science and engineering.

In the nursery playground girls were frightened of crossing a plank. 'Boys used this equipment in a way bordering on recklessness and it was clearly a means to establishing lack of fear and general bravado. On one occasion the observer helped one girl to cross by holding her hand, and this resulted in other girls demanding the same help including those who had successfully and independently tackled the task before.'

As far as the battle for equality and independence is concerned, my own depressing experience, as the mother of a four-year-old daughter, is that a girl's worst enemy is often her mother. From the moment they're dropped children are taught to think in terms of 'boys'' toys and 'girls'' toys and to distinguish between them. I have watched boys chase their sisters away from toys with the words, 'These are boys' toys,' while their mothers sat drinking tea and discussing the merits of wages for housework. These girls learn quickly that they are debarred from a large amount of the goods of the earth.

Thankfully some nurseries like Corams Children's Centre in central London set out specifically to undo the harm. Miss Rita Marchant, a remarkable lady who grew up in a large family where her brothers were taught to sew and she was taught to box, established the nursery 14 years ago and says, 'We train the staff to recognise that boys and girls must be given equal opportunities in everything. That involves thinking about what you say to children at the simplest level. You should never say, ''You're a big strong boy — help me lift this table.'' ' While she spoke, girls were hurtling past in trucks, swinging precariously from climbing frames and playing football. Boys and girls were playing equally with all kinds of toys.

'Of course we still have all the influences coming from books. Publishers have improved a bit in this respect but still have a long way to go. And they can see what goes on in the world around them. Though we tell them that boys and girls can be nurses and doctors here at the nursery we have two male caretakers, all the cooks are women and very few men train to be nursery nurses because of the poor pay.'

Unfortunately most schools and nurseries are not run by someone as enlightened as Miss Marchant. The Northern Ireland study found that many of the teachers were unaware of what was happening before their eyes. When it was pointed out only one teacher made specific moves to counteract it. 'Other teachers expressed the view that, since boys are by nature more boisterous and aggressive, it was in some sense more ''natural'' for them to choose the ''big'' toys.'

For boys and girls, sexism is taught at their mother's knee. By the time they reach the nursery it is already too late. Girls have learnt to be passive and boys to be dominant. According to the researchers it was clear 'that the girls do not expect to win, and the boys expect to and do win'. The power relationships which follow later in the classrooms at school are already set. Girls end up taking the notes and are denied the practical use of the equipment in science classes with obvious results. Girls do much better in science at single sex schools. Boys do better at mixed schools.

When in 20 years' time these little girls find themselves relegated to the back seat in life I hope they will realise that they have only their mothers to blame. In the meantime, the only hope is for girls to learn karate and get a double first.

Máire Nic Suibhne

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NEWSTATESPERSON

The new broom

THE NEW General Secretary of War on Want has been walking on eggshells this week. On Monday — the day his appointment was announced — Francis Khoo gave just three interviews: one to the *Guardian*, one to the *NS*, and one to a Scottish regional newspaper. No hurried press release, no TV lights, and definitely *no* comments about his larger-than-life predecessor, 'Gorgeous' George Galloway MP, whose expense account and sexual exploits brought the charity publicity it could have managed without.

Khoo and Galloway could not be more different. A 39-year-old Catholic Chinese Singaporean, Khoo trained as a lawyer, and practiced at the Singaporean bar, taking up civil rights and trade union causes. In 1977 he narrowly escaped arrest and detention in a mass round-up of activists by the Lee Kuan Yew regime. He fled to Britain, sought political asylum, and still has refugee status.

He now calls himself 'multi-skilled': he works as a journalist on the development magazine *South*, is a political cartoonist, and has raised money for a number of Third World causes. Although he's not a member of any party, he's been active in a wide range of campaigns and organisations generally associated with the left: during the miners' strike he wrote and recorded songs for Hemsworth Miners' Wives Support Group and helped organise soup kitchens; and he was a founder member and vice-chairman of Medical Aid to Palestinians (his wife, Swee Chai Ang, is an orthopaedic surgeon, and has received publicity for her work in the Beirut refugee camps).

War on Want is probably the relief agency most closely connected with the labour movement; it has at times sailed uncomfortably close to Britain's restrictive charity laws, and has annoyed some Conservative politicians. Khoo negotiates questions about these matters with a lawyer's verbal dexterity. The charity must be 'non-political but not apolitical,' he says. This distinction is a little fine: being apolitical means, he says, not acknowledging that poverty has structural political roots; being non-political allows you to say that 'the causes of poverty can be eradicated if those who have the will and the power are made to respond. But it is the responsibility of politicians, parties and parliament.'

Despite his scrupulous determination to be non-partisan, he uses the language of left politics. He says he 'rejects the begging bowl syndrome', and talks of 'the equality of people in struggle'. He wants to forge conscious links between donors and beneficiaries: 'I have always found that the biggest donors have always been the poorest people living in the unemployment blackspots in Britain,' he says. 'They are the people who most readily identify with deprivation.'

He has the supreme virtue of being identified with neither the pro- nor the anti-Galloway faction in War on Want. Indeed, he claims to know almost nothing about the recent turmoils. But he insists that the internecine war must end. 'I will not countenance it,' he says, and adds: 'I'm a tough cookie.' ●

POLITICAL SKETCH

Larceny in the Cathedral

Edward Pearce

LOOK HERE upon this picture and on this. Nigel Lawson escaped his enemies, with an offer so beautifully judged as to stay hypothetical for ever as he underwrote the bankers, deliciously described by one tongue-tripping government backbencher as 'the undertakers'.

It was brilliant stuff, a genuine triumph, conceded as such through clenched teeth. The Chancellor, who has refined lassitude into an art form, was here doing his Nero Wolfe act. Remember the 20-stone private detective who sat celebrating between delicious meals in his upper floor conservatory in a New York brownstone tending orchids from a sedentary position, and who, using the only active part of his inert body, would effortlessly solve murder mysteries without leaving the premises?

There is something very apt about Lawson's ability to cope with the hysteria of the stock market. He is rational, the market is not. The offer of 70p per part-paid share was beautifully calculated to annoy the Labour benches and prevent them from seriously objecting. Nobody is in favour of a further crisis of nerves on the market, yet nobody wants to rescue those persons and institutions who have spent the last three years collecting the rich rewards payable to those who have run an improbable risk and seen it fail to materialise. Betwixt scaring the market already huddled in a corner and weeping quietly and not making a conspicuous handout to underwriters, Mr Lawson was stuck. Only those who have spent their adult years surreptitiously mainlining on Greyfriars and Dr Quelch would call Lawson's lucid application of the laws of supply and demand a 'wheeze'.

Because the offer was decently low and thus painful for underwriters to snap up, it both steadied the market and miffed Labour quite out of countenance. The outcome, John Smith left looking ineffective for the first time in the decade, as he was charged with being a well wisher of Goldman-Sachs, was the political cream one adds to the strawberry jam and scone of a correct policy judgment.

But late night Thursday scenes of riotous resurrection are one thing. They apply, after all, to a brilliant technicality. Nobody is hurt and the neutral onlooker can award points cheerfully for simple felicity of thinking.

Monday afternoon brought a different, bleaker scene. The Social Security Bill being piloted by John Moore is not a happy piece of legislation. It too is technical and full of etiolated refinements, but it is not morally neutral. Indeed you could be quite conservative-minded and think it not very nice. One of its clauses concerns itself with escaping the consequences of a judgment of the European Court in the Moran case. This lady (Mrs Dorothy Moran) won there the right in her circumstances (disability requiring night superintendence, which were those of 6,000 other claimants) to a higher attendance allowance. After the Bill passes they will revert to the level less painful to the Department and the Treasury.

Much time was expended by Frank Field (whose absence from the Labour front bench looks ever more absurd) in extracting from a trepidatious Mr Moore what is probably a promise that unpaid entitlement under the judgment will be made. But a law to circumvert judgment is being made and it will be a less expensive law!

Mr Moore proceeded with other clauses as they affected the prematurely retired and those youngsters who, losing work, do not become entitled to benefits without further social security contributions, which depend on the other work which in places like Sunderland and Swansea, they have not got and cannot get. As a mechanism for forced recruitment to the YTS scheme it is not attractive.

But the Moran judgment is what counts most. It sought to look after a clutch of the partially disabled — epileptics and haemophiliacs among them — at the generous end of the scale. The legislation puts that right.

It was left to a Tory, the agreeable, concerned figure of Robert Key, to spell out through a specific constituency case the fact that the Minister was taking benefit away from a family with two haemophiliac children who through the wretched misfortune of blood transfusion had become HIV positive with the Aids virus. This is not what Mr Moore wants. Doubtless if Robert Key and others complain loud enough, exceptions can be written in. But it sounds like a miserable Bill and Mr Moore gave no impression of enjoying himself. Labour suddenly became effective, through Frank Field and Robin Cook, precisely by *not* emoting or doing its shock horror act. An impression wafted upwards that here was a cobbled piece of re-targeting which would either have to be re-patched in committee or would come out doing petty inequities for small sums of money to the sort of people for whom no sum of money is small.

There is no need to moralise. Problems are seen at opposite ends of the telescope for the claimant and the Minister. With £44bn being spent this year on Social Security, no Minister could not be concerned. But it is miserably easy for the reforming or rationalising Minister to become by desperate inadvertence a sort of statutory Jacob Marley.

Perhaps what the two scenes prove is that the stock market is easy. With a little subtlety and 'targeting', bears and bankers may be accommodated. Social security by contrast is a species of public sector Cathedral. Who can say what are the free standing columns which could come down without injuring more than the aesthetics of the building and which are the little buttresses holding up something important?

Mr Moore is embarked, with his usual passion for detail, upon a study of welfare gothic. As Mr Key made clear in that short and pertinent contribution, there is more to it than the broad sweep of Early English; there are Lady Chapels accommodating much small anguish and distress among people counting every penny. Such chapels have guardians on all sides of the House. They can be far more trouble to the government than any under-writer.

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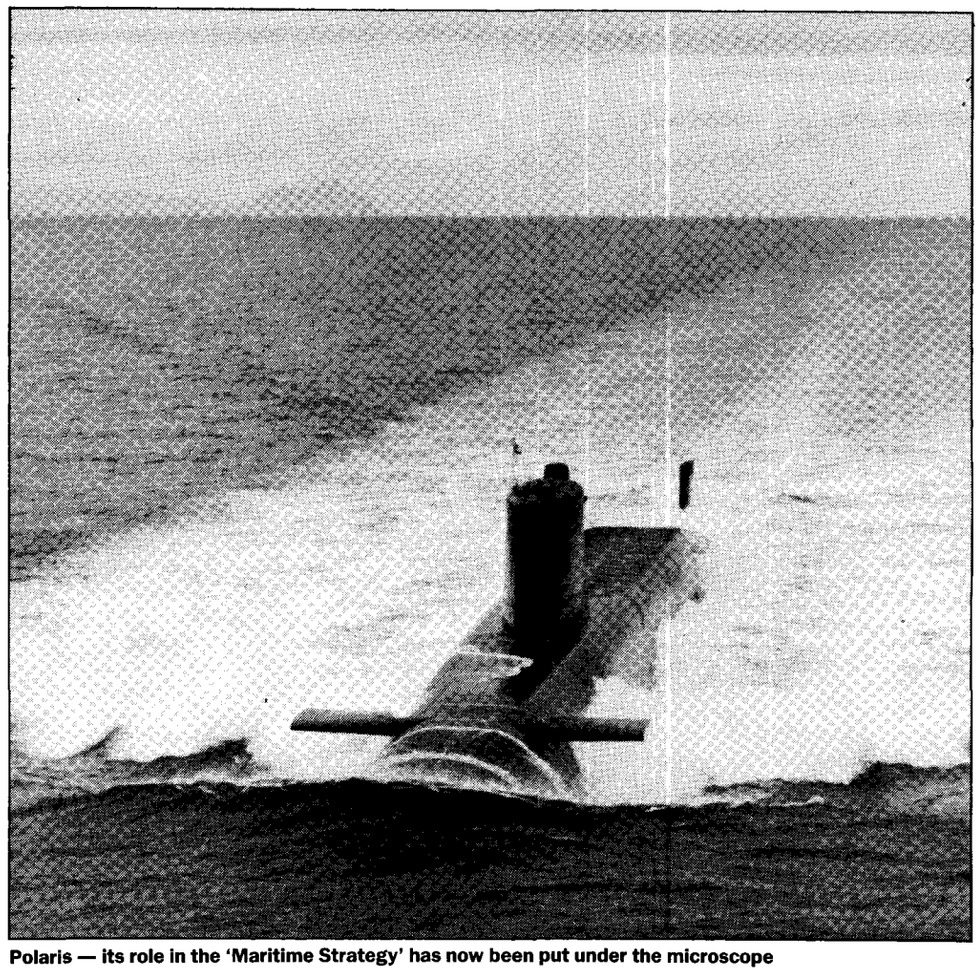
The next (nuclear) war happens at sea

The intermediate nuclear force talks, scheduled for Washington on 7 December, are billed to see Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev sign an accord. But* JEREMY LEGGETT *reveals that the Maritime Strategy, now being developed by NATO, poses the real nuclear threat for the 1990s — and it is a growing one . . .



Polaris — its role in the 'Maritime Strategy' has now been put under the microscope

A superpower crisis has arisen. NATO submarines, followed by surface ships, move forward into the home waters of the Soviet Navy: into the Barents Sea, north of Norway and the Sea of Okhotsk, north of Japan. Their brief is to manoeuvre into position to sink Soviet submarines, and to do so as soon as the first shot of a conventional war is fired. NATO's anti-submarine warfare forces, unable in any case to distinguish Soviet attack submarines from strategic nuclear-missile submarines, will be expected to sink both: the attack subs to prevent them breaking out into the Atlantic and harrying NATO's convoys, the ballistic-missile subs to reduce the number of strategic nuclear warheads which can be launched from under the sea at the United States and Europe.

From their home ports along the Kola peninsula the Soviet submarines, in response to NATO's aggressive forward deployment of naval power, surge forth into the Barents Sea: the ballistic-missile subs to head for the safer waters below the Arctic ice, the hunter-killer attack submarines to offer them a cordon of protection.

In the giant ballistic-missile submarines, Soviet commanders will not be able to communicate with the land command for many hours on end. When they do so, at fixed appointment times, they will have to move up to a more vulnerable position near the surface. They will sit through the early days of the crisis, swept perhaps by NATO sonar, not knowing between one communications appointment and the next if World War III has started, knowing only that the first indication they will get of 'the first shot' on land will be the sound of depth bombs and torpedos entering the water.

Within their hulls, each *submarine holds more explosive power than all the wars in history. And each commander will be carrying with him, together perhaps with one or two other senior officers aboard, the keys which would allow him to unleash that firepower on the West — irrespective of command authority from the shore.*

NATO forces track the ballistic missile subs, coaxing all possible advantage from the West's quieter hunter-killer submarines and its lead in the top-secret technologies of anti-submarine warfare.

Aboard both Soviet and NATO vessels are hundreds of tactical nuclear weapons: nuclear depth-bombs, nuclear anti-ship rockets, nuclear torpedoes, nuclear cruise-missiles, nuclear anti-submarine missiles. These, like the instruments of Armageddon in the ballistic-missile submarines, can in principle be used without authority from the shore.

Both sides manoeuvre, and wait. Thousands of young men, trying hard not to envision the dreadful deaths which await them in the icy water should a torpedo turn their particular submarine into a billion-dollar coffin, waiting to see if the international crisis erupts into a shooting match somewhere on a NATO-Warsaw Pact border . . .

A FICTIONAL FANCY? No. Merely a portrayal of the situation which will arise if current NATO and Warsaw Pact naval plans — articulated in the defence literature, and rehearsed in exercises over the last few years — are practised when the superpowers stumble into their next major crisis.

NATO's 'Maritime Strategy' — a suitably low-key official description for a high-controversy policy — has been shaped, argue cynics, by a US Navy eager to justify a 600-ship programme at a time when the sister services are making ever stronger calls for funding. Though the nature of the evolving strategy has been clear to readers of arcane Congressional records since the early 1980s, the first 'public' articulation of the Maritime Strategy was in a confident, hawkish, paper by the then US Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral James Watkins, in a naval journal last year.

That paper has since generated a stream of analysis, both critical and supportive, in the defence journals. However, the fact that NATO

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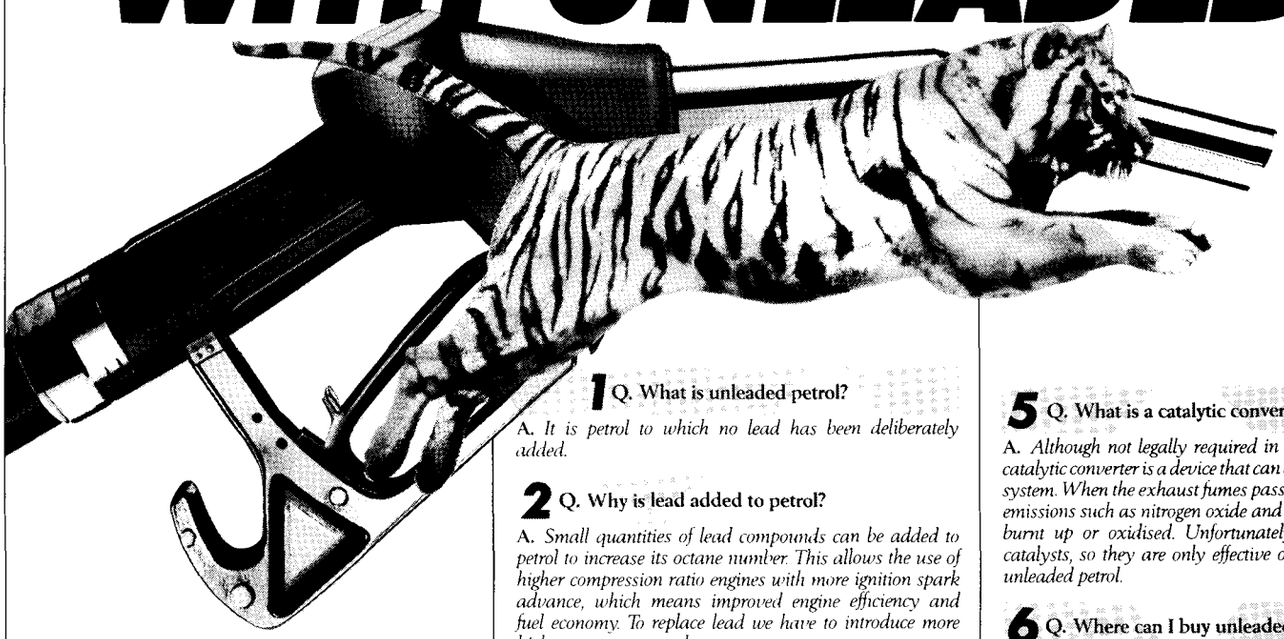
LEAPING AHEAD WITH UNLEADED.



Unleaded petrol is becoming the order of the day for more and more motorists in Britain.

And the company that is serving them best is Esso.

We were the first company to introduce unleaded petrol in Britain, opening our first pump in June 1986.

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You may ask, "What has this to do with me? My car can't run on it."

The surprising fact is that 40% of post-1985 cars can run on unleaded petrol with minor adjustments to their engines. Eventually, of course, all new cars will be designed to run on unleaded, which should be widely available in the UK and other EEC countries by October 1989.

For motorists, the changeover will probably raise a series of questions – which is why we've produced this page.

Alternatively, you can pick up the Esso Unleaded leaflets, including our Service Station Site Directory, at your nearest Esso station.

We hope that in this European Year of the Environment you will find them helpful.

1 **Q. What is unleaded petrol?**

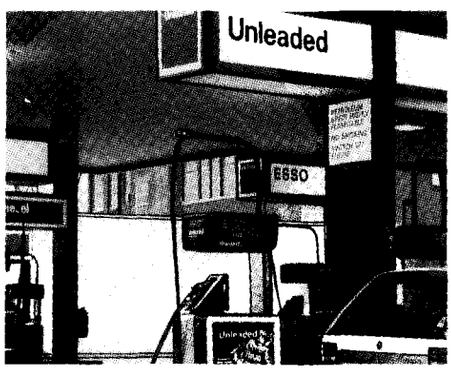
A. *It is petrol to which no lead has been deliberately added.*

2 **Q. Why is lead added to petrol?**

A. *Small quantities of lead compounds can be added to petrol to increase its octane number. This allows the use of higher compression ratio engines with more ignition spark advance, which means improved engine efficiency and fuel economy. To replace lead we have to introduce more high octane compounds to compensate.*

3 **Q. What is 'low lead' petrol compared to unleaded?**

A. *Low lead refers to the normal leaded petrol which is currently available. This is because the lead content was reduced in all petrol to 0.15g per litre on 1st January 1986 from its previous level of 0.40g per litre, in line with British Standard 4040. Unleaded petrol is allowed to contain up to 0.013g per litre which is why it cannot be called 'lead free,' although on the Continent this term may be used where unleaded cannot be translated.*



4 **Q. Can I use unleaded petrol in my car?**

A. *The majority of cars in the United Kingdom have been designed to run on leaded petrol. However, nearly 40% of post-1985 petrol cars are now capable of running on unleaded fuel, although most will need some minor adjustments to allow this. Eventually all new petrol cars will incorporate the necessary modifications for them to run on unleaded. Before attempting to use unleaded petrol you should check first with your car dealer or motor manufacturer.*

5 **Q. What is a catalytic converter?**

A. *Although not legally required in the UK at present, a catalytic converter is a device that can be fitted to the exhaust system. When the exhaust fumes pass through the converter, emissions such as nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide are burnt up or oxidised. Unfortunately, lead damages the catalysts, so they are only effective on cars already using unleaded petrol.*

6 **Q. Where can I buy unleaded petrol?**

A. *Esso were the first company in the UK to put unleaded on sale. And since then we have been increasing the number of our service stations that sell unleaded petrol. We have more stations selling unleaded than our competitors – and by the end of 1987 the number of sites will have risen to over 200. For details of where you can buy Esso Unleaded please pick up a FREE copy of our latest site directory from any Esso station.*

7 **Q. How will I know which pump dispenses unleaded petrol?**

A. *Esso Unleaded pumps are clearly marked UNLEADED and will usually have a small pump nozzle and identification cover marked UNLEADED on the nozzle.*

8 **Q. What happens if I inadvertently put the wrong fuel in my car?**

A. *Given the safeguards mentioned above it would be very difficult for you to do so. However, an isolated incident may not be too serious. Unleaded petrol used in an engine designed to take leaded, or leaded petrol used in an unleaded engine, could eventually cause damage to the engine.*

9 **Q. What about other petrol fuelled equipment like my lawn mower and chain saw?**

A. *Some will operate successfully on unleaded. However, you should check with the manufacturer or dealer for specific advice and follow their recommendations.*

10 **Q. For how long will leaded petrol continue to be available?**

A. *Unleaded petrol will be phased in over a number of years. Therefore both leaded and unleaded will be available for a transition period which will be as long as the present product is required to supply today's cars.*

11 **Q. What happens if I take my car to the Continent?**

A. *Both leaded and unleaded petrol are available in Europe. There may be slight differences in unleaded to take account of local conditions, but this is unlikely to affect a car that can run on unleaded petrol.*

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intends to go for Soviet ballistic missile submarines 'within the first five minutes of the war', as the ex-US Navy Secretary put it to Congress, has yet to register as an issue with the public, with parliamentarians, and the media. Greenpeace, which launched an international 'Nuclear-Free Seas' campaign recently, has been the only organisation to respond to the growth of the nuclear capability in the superpower navies, and to their increasingly dangerous postures. Senior Washington military analyst Bill Arkin, in a paper published by Greenpeace this week, documents the arms-control measures needed to reduce the danger.

In Parliament, the Royal Navy's active role in the Maritime Strategy has yet to be put under the microscope. Defenders of the Maritime Strategy in both Washington and London, have yet to address the case in public that they have introduced handsome new scope for nuclear war to start by accident, irrational act, or miscalculation.

'Forward defense'

During a conventional war in Europe, barring early use of nuclear weapons on the German battlefields (a significant proviso), the Atlantic convoys would assume the same importance they did in World War II. NATO's naval priority would be defence of those convoys against Soviet submarines. The first rationale for the Maritime Strategy is to bottle up the Soviet attack subs close to home, far from NATO's convoys. The naval war would simply be fought in the Barents Sea rather than the central Atlantic.

If this was all there was to it, and if a gentlemen's agreement could somehow be arrived at which exempted the ballistic missile submarines from combat, perhaps doubters might have been persuaded. (Assuming they discount the dozens of rotting nuclear reactors and hundreds of tactical nuclear weapons which would be left in broken submarines littering the ocean floor, seeping virulence into the world ocean for centuries after a 'conventional' war at sea.)

But there are, necessarily, two additional planks to the US Navy's rationale. After initiation of hostilities in Europe, 'initially the bulk of Soviet naval forces will deploy in areas around the Soviet Union, with only *a small fraction* [my emphasis] deployed forward. Soviet exercises confirm such an interpretation', concedes Admiral Watkins. All-out forward deployments by NATO cannot be justified on the basis of forward defence alone.

The second plank, then, involves broadening the front. 'The Soviets would, of course, prefer to be able to concentrate on a single theater; a central premise of US strategy is to deny them such an option . . .' Inherent in the Maritime Strategy are air attacks and amphibious assaults from sea on the Soviet naval bases (on the Kola Peninsula in the case of the Soviet Northern Fleet, and the Kamchatka peninsula and Asian coast in the case of the Pacific Fleet). The idea in threatening to unleash the Marines on Soviet territory is to spread the Soviet military machine thinner than would be the case if NATO simply concentrated on the central front in Europe.

Recall that US forces would be moving into positions from which to carry out these attacks *in a time of crisis*. Herein lies the first concern: the danger of the crisis becoming self-fulfilling as a result of adopting this aggressive stance must be immense. Watkins himself seems confused on this point. Forward movement of US naval forces, he says in his paper, ' . . . would be triggered by recognition that a specific international situation has the *potential* (my emphasis) to grow to a global superpower confrontation'. Yet in early 1984 Admiral Watkins told Congress: ' . . . Peace, crisis, conflicts: often in today's world there are no clear demarcations.'

This is not difficult to believe: in recent years: ' . . . our operating tempo has been about 20 per cent higher than during the Vietnam war,' says Watkins of the US Navy's assertive stance at sea. 'We have begun exercising our submarines in Arctic waters, where they might be called upon to execute portions of the Maritime Strategy,' and 'we test it in exercises, in war games, and in real-life scenarios. In 1984, for example, the Navy participated in 106 major exercises, *55 of which involved our allies*.' (My emphasis).

Was this discussed in Parliament?

The real-life scenarios have involved simulated attacks by Soviet Backfire bombers on NATO ships on exercise. Watkins and other senior officers make no secret that these mock attacks are actually encouraged.

Other objections to the Maritime Strategy leap to mind. Just when a Soviet leader seems genuinely intent on a military build-down, NATO has produced a plan involving attacks on the Soviet homeland, and has even begun to rehearse them in peacetime. Ammunition aplenty has been provided for Kremlin hawks to argue against the allure of disarmament.

Ambushing the archer

But the third plank in the US Navy's rationale is the worst one: 'We will wage an aggressive campaign against all Soviet submarines, including ballistic missile submarines,' promised Admiral Warkins, ' . . . the over-riding goal is to counter the Soviet missile launching platforms, to shoot the archer before he releases his arrows.'

Consider the significance of this tactic to a worst-case strategist in the Kremlin. By the early- to mid 1990s — irrespective of whether the superpowers sign a treaty cutting strategic arsenals by 50 per cent — the US Navy will have deployed at sea Trident II missiles in sufficient numbers to provide, in concert with other missiles already deployed, a theoretical first-strike capability against Soviet land-based forces. No one in the West imagines that the US Command Authorities would ever contemplate *using* a first-strike capability in a bolt-from-the-blue manner, but the fact is that Soviet planners will not be able to ignore the possibility that the US *might* be tempted

Clive Jenkins Apology

In our issue dated 29 August 1986 we published a profile of Norman Willis headed 'Onward shuffles Norm'. In the course of that profile, we stated that Mr Clive Jenkins, General Secretary of ASTMS, was said to have suggested to fellow general secretaries first that Mr Willis should leave his post as General Secretary of the TUC, second that Mr Willis should be warned that he would have to go if he did not do well at Congress. We also stated that Mr Jenkins had denied making any such suggestion. The profile implied that Mr Jenkins' denial was a lie.

We are informed by Mr Jenkins, and accept, that he made no suggestion that Mr Willis should go or be given a warning, and accordingly that his denial was entirely true.

We apologise to Mr Jenkins for any embarrassment and distress which our mistake has caused him.

A policy of provocation

TWENTY-FIVE years ago last week, the superpowers blundered their closest yet to nuclear war. Jack Kennedy sweated in the White House, believing his forces were doing nothing provocative as they enacted his plan to set a blockade on the Soviet ships bearing Khruschev's missiles to Cuba. But they were. In the Atlantic, US commanders harried Soviet submarines aggressively, following 'standard operating procedures'. The chief of the Strategic Air Command sent out an order putting US nuclear bombers on the highest level of alert since World War II: he did it, without authority, uncoded. Many of Khruschev's advisors would have taken these actions, unforeseen and unwanted by the White House, as the action of a country about to launch a nuclear attack . . .

The world survived the Cuban missiles crisis more by luck than judgment.

A quarter of a century later, the US has not 5,000 nuclear weapons but 25,000. The Soviets have not 300 but 25,000. The delivery time for these weapons has shrunk from the hours taken by an intercontinental bomber to reach its target, to the minutes taken by a missile.

Between a quarter and a third of the 50,000 weapons are carried at sea. About 60 per cent of them are ballistic missiles for long-range ('strategic') land attacks. But 40 per cent of the weapons carried at sea are for 'tactical' use: by one superpower navy against the other.

Nuclear weapons at sea carry electronic locks: 'permissive action links', or PALs. Although PALs cannot generally be deactivated unless a coded message comes from the highest authority, this is not so at sea. Naval commanders can, in principle, use their weapons without authority from the shore. The defenders of the status quo ask us not to be concerned, because a small group of officers is needed to ready and fire the weapons. However, as the retired captain of an American ballistic-missile submarine has observed, there is precious little democracy aboard a naval vessel.

Procedures and policies for use of tactical nuclear weapons by Soviet vessels are essentially unknown. Any policy which provokes, or endangers, a Soviet vessel may be mortgaging the first shot of a nuclear war to the temperament and stolidity of individual commanders in the Soviet Navy. ●

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to do so . . . especially in a time of rising tension. The 'benefits' which arise for the side 'going first' have been well aired in the chillingly detached literature of nuclear strategy.

Couple this with the avowed intention of Caspar Weinberger to deploy a partial defence system against incoming ballistic missiles by the early 1990s (the first stage of Star Wars). The Soviets see SDI as a shield to use behind the sword: as a 'mop-up' mechanism for any of their missiles which escape the ambush attack. The strategic importance to the Soviets of their ballistic-missile submarines becomes obvious.

One third of the Soviet strategic arsenal is sea-based, and vulnerable (to an extent unknown to civilian analysts) to the West's anti-submarine warfare superiority. Two thirds of the US strategic arsenal is sea-based, and according to the recent testimony of the US Navy Secretary in Congress, completely safe from the Soviets until at least the end of the century.

Advocates of the Maritime Strategy ask us to believe that there is no risk of provoking the very conflict that the strategy is supposed to deter. They ask us to believe that — if push comes to shove — the Soviets will accept attrition of their ballistic-missile submarine force during a 'conventional' conflict without crossing the nuclear threshold: without using strategic weapons, or without using any of the many hundreds of tactical nuclear warheads which they, like the Americans, carry at sea. They ask us to believe that, once a conflict goes nuclear, it can be controlled and stopped. They ask the impossible. □

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PERMANENT GOVERNMENT

Opening up the Judy Garland of Whitehall

Peter Hennessy

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry in its various guises has had more comebacks than the late Judy Garland. Harold Wilson called it the Ministry of Technology and intended it to be the Whitehall powerhouse fuelling the white heat of Labour's scientific revolution. Ted Heath built a mega-industry, the first DTI, which took in the old Board of Trade and the Ministry of Fuel and Power and he brought in John Davies from the CBI to run it. Davies announced a policy of no more lame ducks. Within a year the lame ducks began tottering through the department's front door.

Mrs Thatcher's instinctive attitude to the way Whitehall should organise its relationship with British industry is fascinating. It emerged during this year's general election when she tackled a questioner at a Manchester factory who had asked about the north-south divide by replying: 'Just remember the north was made prosperous long before the south. The north was made prosperous by the initiative of the people long before there was any such thing as a Department of Industry or people from government telling them about technology.' It's as if she believes the next industrial revolution will happen if only Whitehall would behave as it did during the first one when the Board of Trade consisted of a handful of clerks who, as Gilbert and Sullivan might have put it, 'did nothing in particular and did it very well'.

Her favourite minister, Lord Young, has definite plans for the DTI which was his present from the Prime Minister for helping win the election. He is in the middle of a rethink intended to turn it into a department of enterprise, a kind of management consultancy for the sunrise industries instead of a hospice for old staples which are taking a terribly long time to expire. The new model ministry will be unveiled in the New Year. But Lord Young let the Conservative Party Conference into his philosophy, his 'very simple rule of thumb: my department should spend far more of its time finding ways to help industry to trade than it should do inventing and enforcing rules and regulations to stop industry trading'.

> ***'The DTI is the department where a new-blood Whitehall recruitment policy should be tried. Unlike some other specialist ministries the best experts tend to be outside its walls doing frontline jobs in industry and commerce'***

THIS LATEST rebirth of the Whitehall department responsible for tackling the country's most persistent problem since 1945 — the relative under-performance of our industry (a phenomenon to which the never-ending renaming and rejigging is directly related) prompts some thought about the civil servants who stagger from one relaunch to the next. Such is the inbuilt schizophrenia of the public service ethic of our career bureaucracy that they have to change from passionate public enterprisers to fervent deregulators and free marketeers at least three or four times in their official lifetimes. Yet the British Civil Service, unlike the French who, since Napoleon have put their faith in technocrats and engineers capable of acting as surrogate entrepreneurs, was not designed for such purposes.

The original job specification required them to be umpires ensuring fairness, probity and efficiency in those few activities in which the mid-Victorian state took a direct hand. When the bureaucracy took off early this century in terms of numbers and scope it was, as Eric Hobsbawm shows in his new book, *The Age of Empire**, in response to the political drive to build a prototype welfare state not to intervene in industrial matters, labour relations apart. When both world wars required Whitehall to regulate markets, control and apportion supplies and actually to make armaments, outsiders were brought in with directly relevant skills to work alongside the regulars for the duration.

For these reasons, the DTI is for me *the* department where a new-blood Whitehall recruitment policy should be tried. Unlike some other specialist ministries, the best experts tend to be outside its walls actually doing the front-line jobs in industry and commerce. The huge shifts in emphasis, when government changes, buttress the argument for a task-force approach to policy, with outsiders brought in who reflect the priorities of the new administration. They would work in substantial numbers alongside the career men and women whose skills in running the machine, dealing with parliament and providing the necessary amount of continuity should not be underestimated.

If Lord Young were a true Whitehall radical, he would announce his intention of asking the Civil Service Commission to advertise and to hold an open competition for the succession of Sir Brian Hayes when he retires from the permanent secretaryship of the DTI in the spring of 1988. Maybe a career civil servant would win that competition but he or she should prove their worth against the best of the private and public sector who fancy a spell on the inside track. □

* E.J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire: 1875-1914*, Weidenfeld, £16.95.

Peter Hennessy is a Visiting Fellow at the Policy Studies Institute.

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Blowing the whistle

PAUL DAVIES *reports on the forthcoming split in the Church of England on homosexual priests*

HOW MANY homosexuals has the Church of England? Some put the figure at 40 per cent. The question of homosexuality and the Church is set to be the main battleground for next week's General Synod.

A private member's motion, proposed by Tony Higton, Rector of Hawkwell Parish Church, Essex, seeks to get the Church's ruling body to affirm that 'fornification, adultery and homosexual acts are sinful in all circumstances' and that being 'exemplary in all spheres of morality' should be a condition on members of clergy being appointed or remaining in office. Higton, and his pressure group, Action for Biblical Witness to Our Nation (ABWON), call for a return to 'biblical morality' and attack the archbishops and bishops for their lack of leadership on this issue. They present themselves as the guardians of the true spirit of the gospel in the face of a decadent church establishment which refuses to discipline clergy for 'sexual immorality'.

Most of Higton's support comes from the evangelical wing of the Church and is concentrated in the House of Laity, rather than amongst the clergy and the bishops. His high level of support — 168 of the 550 Synod members signed his motion, putting it at the top of the list — is, in part, a consequence of the Bishop of Durham affair: may fundamentalists were elected to Synod in 1985 in the wake of, and in protest against, the row over the Bishop's views on the Virgin Birth. Indeed, one of Higton's allies, the Rev. David Holloway, vicar of Jesmond, was a leading figure in the anti-Durham campaign.

Higton and Holloway launched their report to Synod, *Sexuality and the Church*, last week; it makes clear that hounding homosexual clergy is not enough. Higton argues that *any* candidate for ordination who 'justifies homosexual practice . . . should not be allowed to proceed towards ordination'. This expresses the heart of Higton's intentions: ABWON wants to transform the Anglican Church into a fundamentalist, 'moral majority', body.

To many, inside and outside the Church, the Anglican establishment's position seems to be one of double-think. Either homosexuality is right or wrong, they protest, and surely, after 2,000 years of Christianity, the Church ought to know its mind? Higton complains that people in our *nation* (a word of which he is fond) are crying out for firm moral leadership rather than episcopal equivocation.

An open mind

The last time the Church of England debated homosexuality, in 1981, it declined to make a firm statement on the issue. A report by a Working Party of the Board of Social Responsibility, chaired by John Yates, the liberal bishop of Gloucester, was received by Synod — but its conclusions were neither endorsed nor rejected. The Gloucester report argued: 'We do not think it possible to deny that there are circumstances in which individuals may justifiably choose to enter into a homosexual relationship with the hope of enjoying a companionship and physical expression of sexual love similar to that which is to be found in marriage.' Many in the church took exception to this clause, but the then Chair of the Board, Dr Graham Leonard, now Bishop of London and very much a conservative (he is the Prime Minister's favourite cleric), concluded: 'The question of homosexuality raises questions to do with the authority of Scripture and the Church's tradition. Because of this, we do not think that the Church of England is yet ready to declare its mind on the subject.'

That position is still favoured by the Church establishment. The Archbishop of Canterbury, in an interview in *The Times* in March, described homosexuality as 'a moral handicap', but fell far short of the unequivocal condemnation demanded by Higton. Dr Runcie argued: 'We do not hold erotic homosexual genital processes to be a responsible way of living for a Christian', but also spoke of homosexual couples in stable relationships 'actually providing in terms of simple human generosity, hospitality, artistic achievement and flair, what I can't gainsay as human good.' Dr Runcie has himself knowingly ordained gay clergymen, so is hardly likely to want the Anglican Church to go down the witch-hunting path charted by Higton.

There are more radical voices in the Church which attack Higton's uncritical notion of 'biblical standards of morality'. To theologians like John Bowker, Dean of Trinity College, Cambridge and President of Christian Action on Aids, evangelicals like Higton and Holloway have a crude understanding of hermeneutics which cannot be sustained in the modern world. 'When people talk about "Biblical morality", what they are trying to do is to reinstate the Bible *qua* text like the Koran or the Torah. But the Bible will not function for Christians like the Koran for Moslems.'

Bowker argues that Christian communities can change their attitudes as their knowledge of the 'natural order of things' expands. St Paul's views on slavery are universally discounted by Christians today; homosexuality, he claims, should be treated in the same way: 'The sense of the gospel is combined with our understanding of the natural order of creation to the point where the Church transcends the Biblical text.'

Others in the church cite the work of the American historian John Boswell, author of *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* (University of Chicago Press, 1980), who argues that St Paul's words on homosexuality have been misinterpreted and that the early church exhibited a tolerance of homosexuality which extended to the point of elaborate ceremonies to bless gay couples. But in the ABWON report to Synod, David Wright, Senior Lecturer in Ecclesiastical History at Edinburgh University, writes that 'not one item of evidence reveals the mind of the early church countenancing homosexual conduct'.

Closets and cloisters

But on one question, Higton and his opponents agree: the large numbers of homosexuals in the clergy. While he dismisses the claims of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement that the number of gay clergy could perhaps be as high as 30 or 40 per cent, Higton admits: 'It is thought that some 4 per cent of the general population are [sic] homosexual . . . I am prepared to accept that the percentage of the 11,000 full time clergy may be much higher (as is true for certain professions).'

Why should this be? Higton advances no explanation, but his main adversary in this debate, the Rev. Richard Kirker, General Secretary of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement, suggests a number of reasons. He notes that the majority of gay clergy are to be found in the Anglo-Catholic camp which, notwithstanding its conservatism on other issues, has, historically, shown a greater degree of tolerance towards homosexual priests than have the evangelicals. Undoubtedly, the ritualism of the High Church is a key factor in its appeal to some homosexuals who revel in the ecclesiastic camp of copes and candles. Indeed, the

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'high church queen' has been a familiar feature of Anglo-Catholicism since the end of the last century and, as Tom Driberg and others have described, some Anglo-Catholic churches became havens for homosexuals at a time when their sexuality was against the law. In a study of the link between a sexual and a religious minority, David Hilliard states: 'For many homosexual men in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Anglo-Catholicism provided a set of institutions and religious practices through which they could express their sense of difference in an oblique and symbolic way.'*

But an aesthetic appeal to a homosexual sensibility which delights in shocking the more 'manly' and 'muscular' sections of the church by donning a kind of ecclesiastical drag, is not the only factor. Richard Kirker believes that one of the reasons why the church attracts so many homosexuals to its ranks is because it offers opportunities for the personal care of people who are marginalised by society: 'As homosexuals, we may be best able to offer support because we know how valuable it is to be supported. By being an outsider you can understand many of the outsiders who come to the church for support.'

Another reason he advances is that, until last year, it was an all-male club, membership of which 'confers certain prestige and privileges which may compensate, psychologically, for being considered by the outside world as unacceptable and deviant'. Many homosexual clergy oppose the ordination of women and take a conservative line on both religious and political matters. One of the problems which LGCM faces is that within Our Father's cloisters there are many closets. A large number of homosexual priests and deacons adopt rather antiquated attitudes to their sexuality and what gay liberationists term 'self-oppression' is common. Indeed, now that the issue has hit the headlines with Higton's motion, one homosexual clergyman complained to Richard Kirker: 'Why have you blown the whistle on us?' Attitudes like that can only benefit Higton's campaign.

The issue of gays in the church will not go away whatever happens at Synod next week. The feeling at Church House is that Higton's motion will not be passed and that a compromise amendment put by the Bishop of Chester will carry the day. That amendment still talks of homosexual genital acts 'falling short' of the biblical ideal of fidelity within a permanent married relationship, but removes the clause which would bar gay priests from holding office. This 'compromise' is not supported by LGCM which is proposing its own amendment calling for permanence and commitment in all relationships and advocating 'Christian education for young people and parents in the dangers, both spiritual and physical, of sexual promiscuity, whether heterosexual or homosexual'.

This is unlikely to be accepted by Synod, but the main area of interest next week will be on whether any of the more radical bishops break ranks and support the LGCM line and whether the establishment will find some way of ensuring that the Anglican tradition of being more or less all things to all people survives intact. □

* David Hilliard: 'UnEnglish and Unmanly: Anglo-Catholicism and Homosexuality' in *Victorian Studies*, Vol 25, No2, Winter 1982 (Indiana University).

MEDIA

The servility of the black press

John Sloan

At a recent freelance branch meeting, Lionel Morrison, President of the National Union of Journalists, said he was concerned over the lack of black journalists in attendance. His explanation for this was that black journalists felt excluded because the matters discussed at NUJ meetings 'had little or no relevance' to their particular needs.

As a black journalist, I found this explanation both naive and surprising. Black papers, which employ the majority of black journalists in this country, have only just *begun* to recognise the NUJ; have the editors of the various black papers failed to mention this fact to Lionel Morrison, who meets them as the principal information officer of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), as well as socially?

In an interview given to the *UK Press Gazette* during his year as the NUJ figurehead, Lionel Morrison said that he would do his best to see the cause of black journalists in the union and in British journalism is championed. I had hoped, from this statement, that his first priority would be to tackle management and editorial malpractices in the black press — *and the local authorities who effectively control the black press, through the placement or non-placement of lucrative advertisements*.

A classic example of this is Brent's recent efforts to stifle certain black papers. In a recent letter she wrote to Lambeth leader Linda Bellos, Merle Amory, the former leader of Brent, asked for all advertising in *West Indian News*, which had been constantly critical of Brent's policies, to be stopped. The paper was forced to close down by the subsequent withdrawal of ads. *New Life*, the radical Asian paper, was also critical of Brent's policies. It too had all advertising stopped.

While news editor of the weekly *Gleaner*, I wrote an article critical of Lambeth's grant allocation policy to new businesses. The article wasn't of the Fleet Street 'bash your local left-wing council' variety, but simply a questioning story. The Managing Editor, Leon Mitchel, received a letter from Lambeth Chief Press Officer, Al Hanigan, saying how displeased the council was with the story. *It was enough to get me the sack*.

Local councils are fully aware that the black press would not survive without the advertising revenue which they pump in on condition that black papers unquestioningly reproduce council press releases, virtually unabridged. But local councils should not advertise with any publication not covered by proper trade union agreements — and as yet the NUJ has not even seriously attempted to tackle the black press bosses over this matter. Management in the black press toe the line, and spend most of their time making sure that journalists do likewise. Contracts are not worth the paper they are written on, wages are pitifully low; staff are hired and fired with alarming regularity, because management cynically exploit the ever-growing supply of black journalists disillusioned after efforts to join the regional and national press, because of the racism which still prevails there.

I also found the black press unable to raise a black agenda, or to examine the policies and performance of the self-ordained leaders who are thrown up. Last year I wrote an investigative story on Sam Springer, ex-major of Haringey, who was trying to set up Britain's first black bank. I discovered during the course of my investigations that much, if not all, the money would come from Standard Chartered Bank, which has massive financial interests in South Africa. Yet one of Sam Springer's main arguments for founding a black bank was that the black community did not want to invest in banks with South African connections. I received a string of indignant phone calls from people asking how I as a black journalist could write an article which would have a negative effect on another black person. My riposte was that if the black press is ever to get any credibility it must been seen to be fair and questioning of *all* the people who have power over us.

THE BLACK press today has failed to provide its readers with a radical alternative to the overt racism of the tabloids or the middle-class condescension of the so-called 'liberal' papers. Those who have tried have been silenced by councils who bleat about the freedom of the press, or by black proprietors driven like their white counterparts by the profit motive. The spur is *not* the pursuit of journalistic excellence.

At present there are six or seven titles all aimed at the black community. All of them carry the same news. Surely there is only enough room on the market to sustain one or possibly two black titles? They would need to be both financially and editorially independent, with a much larger readership and therefore a great potential for genuine advertising, if they broke free of their local authority patrons. Perversely, it could be that the right-wing Tory government's axe on 'political' advertising will *force* self-reliance on the black press.

Is there a need for a black or ethnic press? In an ideal world the answer would be no. The hopes, aspirations and feelings of everybody, regardless of colour or creed would be reflected in a press which should exist to serve us. But a gutter press which attacks a defenceless 10 per cent of the population by provoking an almost pathological fear of black people among its readers *needs to be questioned*.

A 'liberal' press which cannot develop beyond the notion of 'equality' and spends most of its time examining its navel over whether to employ just one black journalist *also needs to be questioned*. Until the press takes into account the cultural significance of the black experience within white society, and what it means politically, I will support the black press. But I will also continue to question the black press until it to gets its own house in order. □

John Sloan is a freelance journalist.

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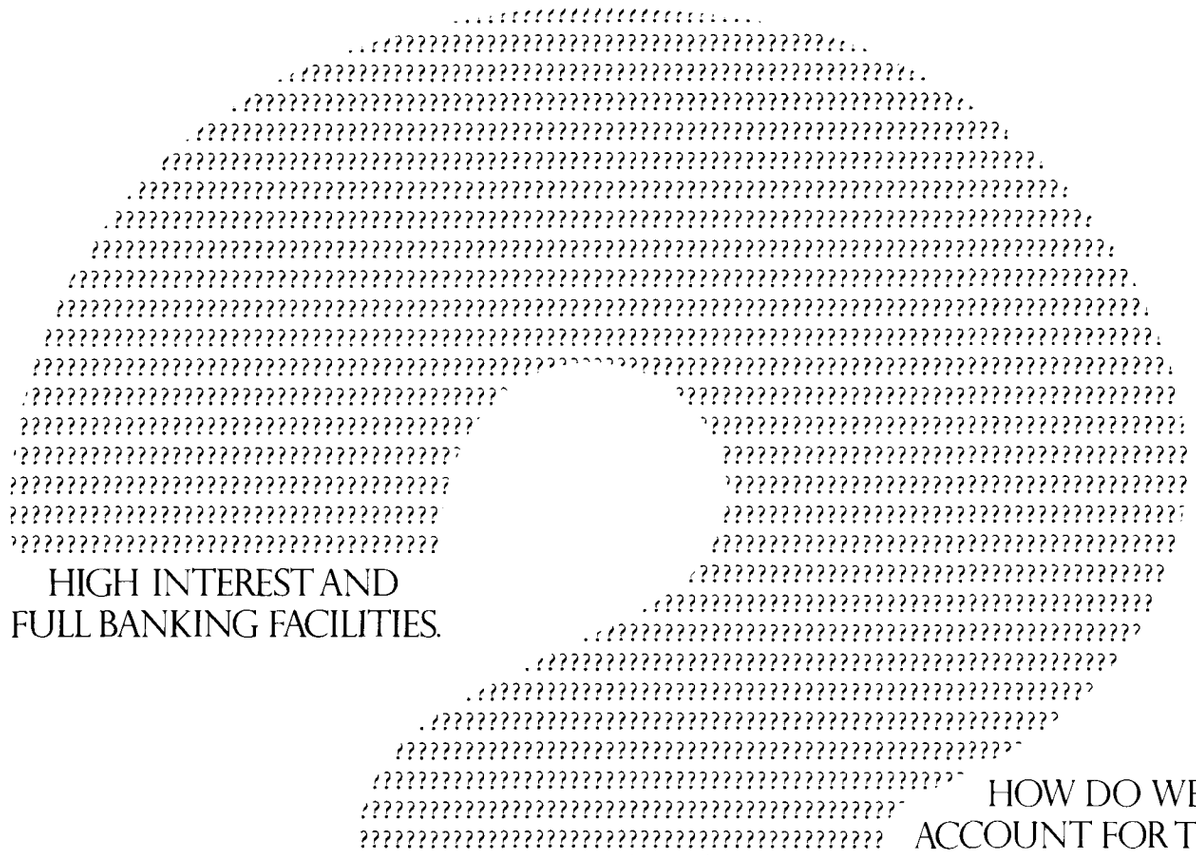

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Crisis or utopia?

DIPAK NANDY *asks what we should believe about our economic future*

IT IS THE cheerful handouts churned out by Bernard Ingham's highly professional publicity machine which make the newspaper headlines. They are what *News at Ten* and *Nine O'Clock News* routinely broadcast to the nation. Their message is uniform, and uniformly rhapsodic. 'The British economy is fundamentally sound'; 'unemployment is falling'; 'industrial growth is rising faster than in any other major economy'; 'the British Economic Miracle has begun'.

But consider each one of those messages. Unemployment in the UK, officially, stood at 3.28 million in September 1986; it has now dropped to 2.75 million. Leave aside the heretical thought that a nation with two and three-quarter million people out of work could hardly be said to be entering an 'Economic Miracle'. Are these figures real?

Here is an alternative view, *not* from the 'loony left': 'Unemployment on the widest definition has fallen by only about 135,000 over the past year, and is now about 3.9m., or over 14 per cent of the working population.' (*Lloyds Bank Economic Bulletin, September 1987*). Since October 1979, the definition of 'unemployment' has been changed *seven* times, and the same politically unimpeachable Lloyds Bank tells us that the net effect of these changes has been to 'reduce' unemployment by over 400,000 people. So much for 'falling unemployment'.

Manufacturing output *is* rising. It would have been a catastrophe if it did not. But what the handouts omit to mention is that after eight grim years manufacturing output has only just climbed back exactly to where it was in 1979. They omit to mention, too, that from 1983 onwards, Britain has *imported* more manufactured goods than it *exported*. And that the deficit in our manufacturing goods trade balance has been widening year by year since then. Is there some miraculous reversal in prospect? We do not know. 'The economy' was not 'on the agenda' at the Party Conference in Blackpool in October.

Again, there is an alternative view. The projections of output growth for the years 1986-88 for the seven major Western industrial countries place Britain at the bottom of the table, at 2.2 per cent, lower than Italy's at 2.6 per cent. And the projections to 1995 show that growth rate slowing down still further, to 2 per cent — and still at the bottom of the table.

Major industrial countries: Projections of Potential Output Growth

(Annual % change)

	1986-88	1989-95
Canada	3.0	2.7
USA	2.7	2.6
Japan	3.6	3.1
France	2.8	2.6
West Germany	2.6	2.2
Italy	2.6	2.5
UK	2.2	2.0

Those projections do not emanate from Walworth Road, but from Washington, DC. They are the IMF's projections (*IMF Annual Report 1987, Table 8*). So much for growing faster than everyone else.

And then there is the unmentionable — the UK's balance of payments prospect. Since 1980, when North Sea oil began to show a trade surplus which reached a peak around 1986-87, we have conveniently been able to forget about 'the balance of payments problem' which has plagued successive governments since the 1960s with 'stop-go' policies. The figures for September, released a week last Friday, showed a deficit of £55m. The newspapers which thought it worth reporting the deficit heaved a sigh of relief that it was a considerable 'improvement' on the £929m. deficit for August. What none of them said is that it is the *fourth* successive month they have showed a deficit.

The latest projections of the national current account (commonly called 'balance of payments') reveals a prospect of steadily mounting deficit from 1986 to 1991:

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
						(£ bn)
Visible Trade	−8.3	−9.2	−13.3	−15.9	−18.7	−22.2
Invisibles	+8.1	+7.3	+9.6	+12.2	+14.8	+19.0
Current Account Deficit	**−0.1**	**−1.8**	**−3.6**	**−3.6**	**−3.8**	**−3.2**

(Lloyds Bank, *UK Economic Outlook 1987-1991*, August 1987, Table III).

The London Business School agrees and projects a deficit of £3.1bn in 1988. The National Institute of Economic and Social Research agrees, and puts the figure for 1988 at £3.3bn. The OECD in Paris agrees, and regards it as the beginning of a continuing trend.

No evidence of miracle

What *could* be the hope for the future as North Sea oil revenues run out? In the regeneration of Britain's vanishing manufacturing base. There are no recent projections of our manufacturing trade balance, but the one produced by the Lloyds Bank Economic Policy Division in 1984 is likely to be in the right direction, and is broadly consistent with their latest projection of the overall visible trade balance (above):

UK Manufacturing Trade Deficit 1983-90

(£ bn)

1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
7.5	10.7	11.8	13.0	14.4	15.9	17.5	19.3

(Lloyds Bank *Economic Bulletin*, September 1984, Table 3).

If that is the shape of things to come, then the experts, and the government, have to explain to the citizenry whether and how a nation can hope to live on 'invisible' earnings alone.

Suppose for a moment that *all* these institutions are actually right? What kind of country is it going to be like to live in which runs an *annual* trade deficit of £3bn well into the next decade? (Those with long enough memories will remember the spectacle of Harold Wilson sweating before the TV cameras in June 1970 as he tried to explain that a deficit of £60 *million* was all due to two jumbo jets which had been delivered a month too early.) The prospect is an unthinkable one, but we had better start thinking about it. The IMF gruffly remarked last month that it saw no evidence of 'the British Economic Miracle'. But that was reported somewhere at the bottom of page 12 column 5.

And that is a *major* part of the problem: that the communicators — the press and television — have singularly failed to communicate the alternative view of our future. Only the most assiduous, un-average citizen is likely to know what view the Lloyds Bank, the OECD, the IMF, the London Business School and the NIESR take of our prospects. Or, indeed, that they share the same, terrifyingly unanimous view.

Are we as a nation heading for a never-had-it-so-good utopia? Are we heading for a catastrophe? Or are we merely sailing into a crisis? □

Dipak Nandy is director of the Intermediate Technology Centre.

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'You can have anything you damned well please'

JOHN LLOYD *and* BEN PIMLOTT

ask Bryan Gould if the non-crisis of capitalism is actually a crisis of Gouldism

HE LAUGHED at the suggestion. He looks at the matter from the view that at least he has an-ism after his name. And asks for some listening time to clarify.

'This whole matter of shares has been inflated, and taken on an importance which was never intended. I wanted to indicate the kind of new thinking that we ought to be willing to contemplate. I take as my starting point that we had made some very very bad mistakes as a party. The classic example is home ownership. Labour is friendly to home ownership. It has increased under Labour governments. We got ourselves locked into opposition to council house sales, in part because of our concern for those who could not afford or did not wish to buy — and that was right for us to do so. But because we focused on the point of selling houses we found ourselves losing support from people who wanted to be house owners. I am so . . . . *impressed* by that mistake that I am determined we do not make it again. So my concern has been on shares: why not concede, to some extent, that it answers a certain need? But then give a *socialist* meaning to share ownership.'

Gould has a bit of a political problem. There was a bull market in Gould before and during the election campaign, boosted in part by his rapid elevation by Neil Kinnock, in part because of his style, graceful and trenchant, on television. He soared on to the National Executive Committee, the first constituency delegate without hard-left support since the '70s. He was talked of as shadow chancellor, and won the considerable prize of shadow trade and industry spokesman. But he had to spoil it all by *saying* things.

'Not surprisingly, I was invited to speak on many platforms. I could have said the party should carry on without change. I did not think that right.'

Was he surprised at the amount of opposition he has stirred up? 'Yes, a little. I think it comes in three kinds. First, which I confess I have not seen much of, is that which comes from perfectly genuine socialists who understand what I'm saying and don't like it. And I respect that entirely. Second, a lot of people who through foolishness or incompetence have been persuaded that I have said things which I haven't. And third, people who know perfectly well what I've been saying and want to make capital out of it.'

But this has come from the right as well as the left: from Roy Hattersley and Gerald Kaufman as well as Tony Benn or Ken Livingstone. He will not personalise it. What he will say is this: that the right has been reduced in power very greatly in the shadow cabinet elections (it lost Peter Shore and Giles Radice: and soon afterwards, the convenor of the Solidarity Group, George Robertson, wrote a rather despairing little note to his fellow members asking them if they thought Solidarity should stay in being). They had been accustomed to run things in the party. The soft left is now in control. The right does not like it. There has been, not an alliance, but a certain symmetry of attack from left and right. ▷

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That being so, then, the obvious question is: is there now a real division between soft left and right (the hard left says not)?

He mentions defence, but does not elaborate. But on domestic policy . . . 'I yield to no one in the party on my defence of equality. I refuse to be outflanked on that. I can't be said to have moved on this issue.'

He draws a number of lines. He would want to get away from all the monetarism which he thinks did creep into Labour, both in government and in opposition. He would not prop up the pound. He would run a large budget deficit. 'The area in which I've always been most active is in opposition to monetarism. I know that stuff, I understand it, I wholly reject it. There is here a conservative/radical divide in the party . . . We have seen that monetary targets are meaningless, in the main. The real economy matters: the paper economy doesn't. Full employment is a quite attainable socialist objective'. Then he says, with an acknowledgement that it may sound arrogant: 'Any government which doesn't have me as a member would be back to the '60s and to defending the pound'.

Off your knees

He is, then, a radical in opinion. He talks of coming to this country from New Zealand at the age of 23 (he is now 48). 'What made me a socialist was to see such a class divide here. And not just a class divide, but a system which reconciled people to it. Like my constituents in Dagenham, who say, in so many words, that such and such a thing — like higher education — is 'not for the likes of us'. I want to say: don't accept it! get off your knees! Demand more! You can have what you damned well please!'

Ben Pimlott observes that the membership of the various sub-groups of the NEC which will co-ordinate the policy review lack much opposition to the soft left, either to its left or right. Is there perhaps a sense of triumphalism? Gould does not think the 'Chesterfield left' has much to say in the way of new ideas, though he is always willing to debate. There is, he says, no well worked-out strategy between him and Neil Kinnock on policy review: he was very much for it, but did not prescribe the way in which it should be conducted.

But he is adamant on the need for open thinking. 'There must be no heresies. People must be able to say whatever they think: that is the way I work with my colleagues here. Now, we might end up with 95 per cent of our present policies. There is no implication that we will change fundamentally.'

And now? He does not think there is a crisis of capitalism. 'Ken Livingstone said the other day that we must be prepared for millions of people deserting the Tories, and must make sure they come to us. It is early days yet, but I do not think that likely. I think what has happened is an inevitable corrective in the markets to mistakes in policy. It was bound to happen sooner or later.'

He returns to the real economy, and notes that the Japanese stand to gain most from the present changes. 'The yen will rise in value, and they will respond by buying up large parts of US industry. They will be seen as a saviour for doing so.'

What of the longer term — and the need for a pact with the Alliance? 'That doesn't matter so much as our electability — that's the real problem. If we can solve the problems of image and credibility, then we will be in a wholly different position from now. I do not think we should concern ourselves overmuch with talk of pacts with the Alliance. All I would say is that we should not, for now, be gratuitously offensive to the Liberals.' He is still more guarded on the matter of deputy leadership. 'If John Prescott runs one would have to take some time to consider the matter. But that is all.'

Even a brief interview with Bryan Gould is exhilarating. He speaks rapidly, almost impatiently: the breadth of his own reference is large, now giving a severely critical rundown of the policies of the Labour government in his native New Zealand ('going through exactly the same stage as did the Thatcher government in the early '80s), now referring to a French journal in which there was an interesting article by the deputy governor of the Bank of France on the Mitterrand government.

He does not appear anxious to conciliate either the hard left or the right. He is a radical, and he places himself in a kind of left Keynesian position. The rapidity of his rise through the party (he was junior trade and industry spokesman under Peter Shore for much of the last parliament) may account for the almost breathless quality of his approach to the large issues which now confront him: though he shows no sign of being thrown by it. Now, as always throughout his career, he is unBritish in the frankness of his ambition and his sense of personal worth. His position is a strong one, clearly: he alludes several times to Kinnock in terms meant to convey closeness and support. The soft left, of which he is certainly a leading member, does now rule the party with a security of tenure which the right has not had for some years. He seems to be having the time of his life.

But he is not solidly based in the party: a measure, too, of the swiftness of his rise. He is more vulnerable than Kinnock, or Hattersley, or John Smith — who can absorb a rather confusing opposition to the government's handling of the crash of '87 without seeing his stock falling much.

He is talking, and writing, down his own image, which has been extraordinarily powerful. He spent some of the past week rebuking the *FT* and the *Guardian* for identifying him with popular capitalism. He has stressed that he called for — as indeed he did — shares for workers in their *own* companies: and says that Labour should simply be neutral about other forms of share ownership. He will not easily shake the matter off: but as the crash fades (if it does) so will his identification with popular capitalism (which he thinks phoney, a 'lubrication of ownership passing from state to large corporate hands').

You are not left, however, with the impression of a man over-promoted or over-hyped. He seems to have the acute intelligence which explains his arrogance and the application which sustains his vaulting ambition. Gouldism has a way to go. □

'This is serious. My public image last matched my self image in August, nineteen seventy nine!'

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Cutting the DASH

BOB COLENUTT *and*
HILARY WAINWRIGHT *report on*
shaky commitments in Docklands

BRITAIN'S FIRST inner-city airport, in London's Docklands, is an elaborate exercise in development by stealth. In November 1983, the *New Statesman* reported on secret discussions about the expansion of the airport to bring in small jets. The airport developers dismissed these accusations as 'politically motivated scare-mongering'. Now, as the Queen gives the airport the blessing of the State, Mowlems announces its intention to apply for permission to extend the runway and lift the noise limits in order bring in a 100-seater British Aerospace jet (the BA 146).

This would be a first stage in expanding the airport beyond the limits laid down by the public inquiry. These limits included a 762 metre runway — 450 metres too small for the BA 146 — and noise levels no greater than those of the quiet, 50-seater Short Take Off and Landing (STOL) propeller-driven Dash-7. The Public Inquiry Inspector who laid down these conditions ended this report with the following words: 'If there should be any significant increase in airport activity or noise impact beyond the maximum levels stated at the Inquiry my conclusions could well be different'.

When the Airport (known then as a STOLport) was first mooted in 1982, there was immense publicity about the user-friendly Dash-7. Brymon Airways flew local people to their HQ in Plymouth to sample the delights of the aircraft. Mowlems and the London Dockland Development Corporation (LDDC) gave assurances at the Inquiry that there would be no jets.

The objectors, including Newham Council and the GLC, were highly suspicious of Mowlems, and throughout the Inquiry argued that commercial pressures would lead to an expansion of the Airport. The objectors' case did have some impact on the Inspector's final judgment: the apparently tight conditions are evidence of this. The Inspector's conditions were to be enforced by Mowlems, the LDDC and Newham Council. The formal Agreement in which this was stated gave the appearance of allowing Newham — the only elected authority involved — a veto over airport expansion. In fact the terms of the Agreement *can* be overridden by the Secretary of State.

Another apparent concession to the objectors was an Airport Consultative Committee. Although this was regarded by the Campaign Against the Airport as a sop, some people believed that it might allow the community to exert influence over airport activities and the enforcement of the Inspector's conditions. The composition of the Consultative Committee, however, makes this impossible: 15 of its 23 representatives have a vested interest in the airport.

Further moves against the spirit of the Inspector's conclusions came when Mowlems started work on the site. They submitted a series of subsidiary planning applications to extend the airport site and enlarge the terminal buildings. And major terminal buildings now push hard up against surrounding flats and the local primary school. Mowlems have recently put in a bid to buy Drew Road School, the only primary school in West Silvertown, in order to build a hotel. Large tracts of land have been acquired on the south side of the Docks for warehousing and storage.

No commitments — yet

The STOLport is now taken a lot more seriously in the airline industry. Soon after the Inquiry, Brymons plunged into financial crisis and were taken over by De Havilland, the manufacturer of the Dash-7 and the main creditor of Brymon. In 1984, De Havilland sold its stake to British Airways, thus bringing Brymon into the major airline league for the first time, giving it the financial backing to diversify away from its dependence on the already outdated and commercially unsuccessful Dash-7.

Then, in 1985, a new company called EuroCity Express, a wholly-owned subsidiary of British Midland, one of the largest medium-ranked UK operators, applied for route licences to European cities in direct competition with Brymon. The Civil Aviation Authority granted licences to both companies.

Even at this stage, EuroCity was quite open about wanting to bring in the BA 146 but had to accept the CAA ruling that licences were tied to the planning conditions imposed at the airport, that is, for the time being, flights restricted to Dash-7 type aircraft. Throughout these events, the LDDC was maintaining an attitude of 'we are on the side of the community'. In February 1987, *Docklands News*, the LDDC freesheet, carried a front-page headline: 'Jets Ban at City Airport'. John Mills, the Vice Chair of the LDDC, was quoted as saying: 'These proposals would be turned down flat by us.'

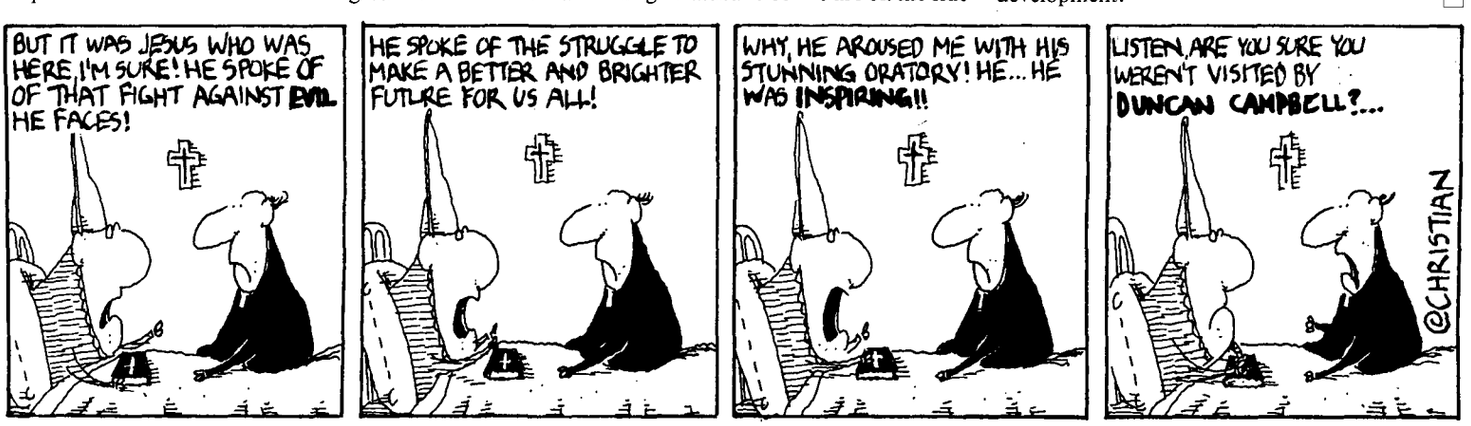
When Mowlems announced in August 1987 that it was considering putting in a planning application to lengthen the runway and 'allow a wider range of aircraft to use the airport', the tune of the LDDC changed somewhat: 'We have given no commitment that jets will be allowed to use the airport in the future,' he wrote in September, adding: 'but it is clearly premature to rule out the possibility of this ever happening.'

BRITISH AEROSPACE invited representatives of the Campaign Against the Airport and the Airport Consultative Committee to Hatfield to see the BA 146. Glossy brochures and videos were shown promoting the 146 and its 'good neighbour characteristics'. The public relations phrases echoed the original hype of the Dash-7.

British Aerospace claimed that the 146, with a longer range than that of the Dash-7, was 'the key to the development of the Docklands area' just as Mowlems had claimed at the Inquiry for the Dash-7. The 146 is described as 'super quiet'. BA argued that the word 'jets' related to 'an outmoded perception of jet noise'. But the fact is that the noise of the 146 significantly breaches the noise limitations for the Airport and requires a considerably longer runway than the original conditions specified.

Mowlems and British Aerospace are attempting to minimise the importance of their airport plans. BA argue that the 146 will 'not open the floodgates to a lot of other aircraft'. Mowlems director Roger Sainsbury told a special conference called 'London City Airport — A New Era for European Business Travel' in October this year that 'there will be no further extension of the Airport after this — that will be it. I can give you a cast-iron guarantee'. Mowlems gave the same 'cast iron guarantee' about the Dash-7. The *New Statesman* then predicted that the BA 146 jets would use the airport within a few years. What are our predictions now? Helicopters for certain; and with a 1200-metre runway a wide range of aircraft including other kinds of jets could enter the airport.

The fears of local people were not simply about noise, but also about their community being squeezed out by the airport. The STOLport posed as a 'community friendly' use of land which would generate jobs. The reality is potentially a very unfriendly, noisy neighbour providing few local jobs and with no local control over its development. □


BUT IT WAS JESUS WHO WAS HERE, I'M SURE! HE SPOKE OF OF THAT FIGHT AGAINST EVIL HE FACES!
HE SPOKE OF THE STRUGGLE TO MAKE A BETTER AND BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR US ALL!
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ESSAY

Laboratory for dreams

As science and technology imperil our future, the need to re-imagine their uses is growing ever more urgent. One place where this is already happening, argues* HILARY ROSE, *is in feminist science fiction

THE NEW LEFT and feminism have, until very recently, been dangerously negligent of the issues posed by science and technology. It has taken the rise of the peace and green movements to raise issues of ecological and species survival and insist that science and technology are too important to be dismissed. Feminism, in defence of women's rights, has now also taken on sociobiology and, in defence of women's bodies, reproductive technology — with some of the most significant interventions coming from feminist sf.

As a very young woman I was a compulsive reader: of poetry, 'literary' novels, even crime, but *not* of science fiction. It went beyond merely not wanting to read it to feeling that it was actively hostile and unpleasant. The pervading qualities were a macho enthusiasm for the technology of domination and a simple equation of technological advance with progress. In sf and in reality, Man saw himself as infinitely irresponsible, always able to move on, to find and conquer new worlds, brutally and carelessly vandalising and laying waste 'his' environment. There was always another planet, another third world country, out there.

It was only in the mid-1970s that I began to discover the burgeoning wealth of feminist sf. At first reluctant to like it — for its evident utopian strand was surely a distraction to stop us realising our dreams now — I caved in over Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (Women's Press, 1979) with its meticulous account of Connie's all too painful existence at home and in the psychiatric hospital, and the time-travelling by which she could even 'fly back into the past and make it all come out differently'. The fundamental difference between the best of this new sf fantasy writing and the old is not merely that the former has added dimensions of gender and race. Whereas the old dystopia or utopia was complete — fixed and final in its gloomy inexorability or its boring perfection — the new accepts that struggle is continuous and interesting. As Luciente, a future person in Piercy's Mattapoissett puts it, the conflict in the future is changed, not ended.

Luciente also says:

> It's that race between technology in the service of those who control, and insurgency — those who want to change the society in our direction. In your time the physical sciences had delivered the weapons technology. But the crux, we think, is in the biological sciences. Control of genetics. Technology of brain control. Birth to death surveillance. Chemical control through psychoactive drugs and neurotransmitters.

The significance of feminist sf's intervention in popular culture needs to be underlined, for not only does it bring to the fore the issues of science and technology, it also offers us dreams and nightmares of different and other futures.

The dialogue between science and science fiction has produced two very different traditions in mainstream sf. One is the technicist, a socially unreflecting tradition; the other is preoccupied with the social implications of science and technology and takes the form of utopian futures or dystopic warnings. Among the prescientific utopias, Plato's *Republic*, at first sight non-sexist, is also a haven of hierarchical and elitist control and retains a reserve of women as the basis for communal marriage. Two thousand years later, Thomas More's early 16th-century *Utopia* projects a pastoral idyll in which human inclination, virtue and the natural are reconciled. For women, however, this idyll still privileges the natural rights of the husband to beat his wife.

> ***'Modern science, in order to dominate the natural world, had to wrest her secrets from her. For science rape was/is the central mataphor'***

These prescientific utopias with their dystopic quality for women are not changed with the advent of the first scientific utopia. Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*, written in mid-17th-century England in a context of political and cultural revolution, is a text to which feminism must pay attention, for Bacon is arguably *the* ideological father of modern western science. Casting Nature as a woman, Bacon's science is unremittingly masculine. No longer content merely to appreciate nature, modern science, in order to exploit and dominate the natural world, had forcibly to know her and wrest her secrets from her. For science, rape was/is the central metaphor.

Nor do the libertarian socialists, from Gerard Winstanley through William Morris to the socialist utopias of the left scientists in the 1930s, offer a new vision for women. Indeed, until a renewed feminist movement had rediscovered its own past — perhaps above all, but not only, the outrageous and witty utopian *Herland* of Charlotte Perkins Gilman — it was all too easy to assume that the history of utopias and utopian science fictional writing contained little that was positive for women.

But life in the feminist culture itself has become incredibly rich. Where, as a very young woman, I used to hug Margaret Mead's *Growing up in Samoa* to myself — for its offering of a different way, where children and parents would no longer be trapped in excessive intimacy — feminism has made it possible to appreciate that this was not a wonderful aberation but part of the systematic construction of an alternative world-view. When Mead argues for 'more vivid utopias', we are reminded not only that every contradiction develops its own opposition but that there has been a long standing feminist commitment to make that alternative vision public.

Struggles around science and technology and their dystopic or utopian possibilities initially take place between books rather than within them. Huxley's novel *Brave New World* was deliberately written to refute Haldane's optimist view of the new reproductive biology. While the left biologists had their sunny hope of cloning lots of little Lenins, Huxley saw extra-uterine birth as promising nothing less than the death of the family. Feminism had to wait until Shulamith Firstone's brilliant — and profoundly flawed — *The Dialectic of Sex* (Women's Press, 1971) decisively shifted the ground rules of the debate towards women. Her achievement was to take Huxley and turn him onto his patriarchal head, seizing within his dystopia the contradiction which enabled her to reveal the feminist utopian possibilities within it. So, where Huxley's test-tube baby signalled the death of the family, and the end of a male-defined civilisation, Firestone saw it as *indeed* the death of the family and, precisely because of that, offering the possibility of a truly civilised society in which women could realise their liberation.

It is true that Firestone failed to understand that science and technology are not independent of the social formation within which they are produced and, therefore, cannot be mobilised in any naive way as the instrument of women's liberation, but this is not germane to the point I want to emphasise — which is the gain from Firestone's dramatic intervention into the politics of science. Her influential writing encouraged women to think imaginatively about the science and technology of reproduction. Because of the indifference and/or hostility to science and technology within the women's movement, Firestone was part of a process of breaking the theoretical and political log jam.

More and more voices

Themes of sexuality and reproduction are strongly present in the concerns of a new tidal wave of feminist sf fiction. This began with a slightly older generation of novelists, above all Ursula LeGuin, whose almost single voice was raised against the androcentric current. More recently, writers like Piercy and Joanna Russ take a more radical and less forgiving stance to the task of overcoming patriarchy. Russ is unwilling to accept men on any terms: her utopia is separatist. Piercy *accepts* men within Mattapoisett, but her new men are not merely socially reconstructed, they are also biologically modified. Fantasy and mysticism around procreation cede to a robust biological interventionism.

Piercy's involvement with radical politics, not least the radical science movement, gives a

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Bestselling dreams of the end of patriarchy

sophistication to her analysis of science and technology lacking in Firestone. In Mattapoisett, the link between biological motherhood and the societal need for new people is broken by turning, just as Firestone does, to extra-uterine conception. The difference is that, where Firestone saw technology as outside society and as an autonomous agent of change, Piercy locates the technology as an integral part of the new classless society organised around a new sex/gender system. She plays with genetic engineering in Mattapoisett to a degree that outside utopia most of us would find hard to take, remembering the long and brutal history of eugenics.

Piercy understands that not only is nature modified continuously by culture — and that includes our own nature — but that our understanding of what is natural undergoes itself subtle changes. Mattapoisett is ecologically sensitive so that people live in harmony with their environment. Sexuality is polymorphous permissiveness, where desire includes love, liking, pleasure and comfort. *Woman on the Edge of Time* uses the privileged and essentially safe place of Mattapoisett to redraw the line between nature and culture.

Mattapoisett's is fundamentally different from earlier utopias in that there is a recognition that uncertainty is the only thing we can be certain about. Even utopia has to contest its space for survival and renewal. Parallel with Mattapoisett is a society where what is gross in contemporary civilisation is amplified a thousandfold. Connie's time travelling to this other place, where women exist as subhuman sex objects, makes it clear why people from Mattapoisett will even die to defend their society. By the side of Piercy's dream of the future is the unequivocal declaration that, unless the future defends itself, the nightmare alternative always exists, waiting to overwhelm utopia.

Joanna Russ is less optimistic about the chance of a new society which includes either new men or has a reconstructed sex-gender system. Her utopia is called Whileaway because the men are 'away'. It is necessarily and pleasurably separatist. Men, writes Russ, 'hog the good things of this world'. But where Piercy writes as a realist, Russ is a post-modernist, not simply acknowledging fractured identity but deliberately splitting herself into four — whose names all begin with J — to play out four simultaneous worlds, yet with the Js meeting and travelling together through realism and identification with a heroine who bears the multi-layered oppressions of America. Except for brief moments, Russ precludes identification. Instead the reader is constantly distanced in an explosion of witty and savage writing.

Russ's difficulties and silences in dealing with the phenomenon of sensitive men suggests that the dualism between heterosexual dystopias and separatist utopias — as against Piercy's polymorphous permissiveness — has all of dualism's usual problems. Nor, with the single and exceptional voice of Piercy, do these white feminists go beyond a non-racist stance. This may be the price of a concept of sisterhood that claims solidarity, begins by de-emphasising individuality and ends by being unable to cope with difference. A utopia created from within the perspectives of white feminists, in which the distinctive experiences of women of colour and black women are erased — not least at the hands of white women — is vulnerable to the criticism of ethnocentricity.

All utopias are global projects; their visions of transformed natural and social worlds endeavour to create seamless webs. But, by contrast with the masculinist utopias and sf, feminist utopias emphasise again and again that technology is not inevitable. Perhaps it is this emphasis at a time when high technology threatens to destroy our lives which helps explain my own return to these writings after so many years. For feminist science fiction, with its strong fantasy strand, has created a privileged space — a sort of dream laboratory — where feminism may try out different wonderful and/or terrifying social projects. In these vivid utopias we can play safely with social possibilities that the urgency of daily life excludes. Issues of sex/gender relations, of the harmony of culture with nature, of the very rationality and linearity of time itself are opened for our inspection.

But it is above all with questions of sexuality and reproduction that the utopias and fictions I have been describing are concerned — and the reasons for this are instructive. In a society where science and technology act not only as forces of production but of reproduction, there is a peculiarly pressing need for a safe space to speculate. It is one thing to transform the production system — even with all the costs that this entails — and quite another to be the personal bodily site of transformations in the reproduction system.

Speculations about the social implications of extra-uterine birth were common long before even the early '70s when it was clear that the birth of Louise Brooks and the other IVF babies was simply a matter of time. But, even then, did we quite understand what this might do to the meaning of motherhood, embedded as that was within a construction of the natural? Did we admit how intimate, how painful are these issues of change in the reproduction system, that, for women, that piece of nature being raped in aggressive Baconian style was actualy our bodies and our lives? By contrast, the feminist utopia offers that self who only gets one lived life — for all the rest is borrowed experience — the chance to dream of other futures. □

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PERFORMANCE

Something rotten in the state of Germany

Stephanie Jordan

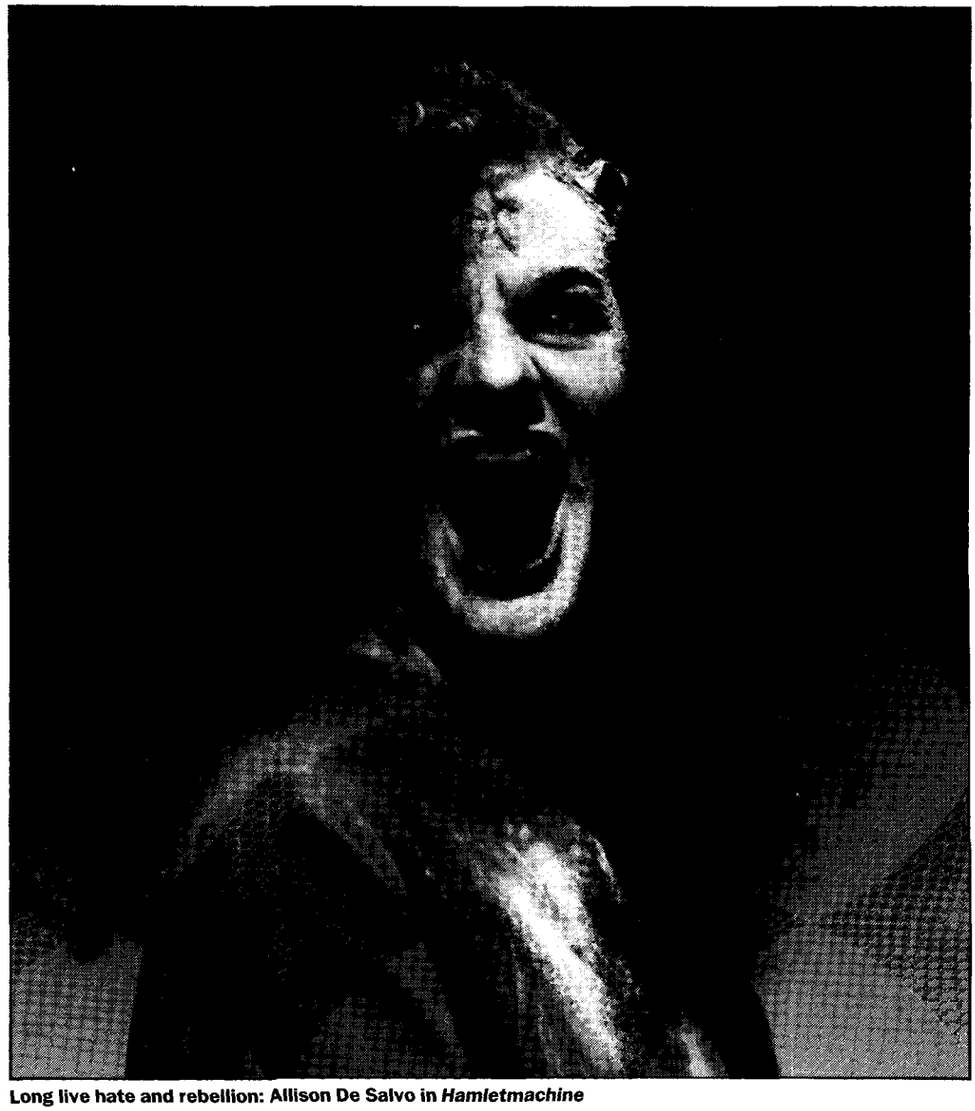
Hamletmachine
HEINER MÜLLER *Almeida Theatre*

ROBERT WILSON, *Hamletmachine's* director, is a postmodern theatre artist in the fullest sense, someone who has made maximum use of the flow of ideas across the media in the USA since the 1960s. Trained in the visual arts, he assimilated the non-linear, pluralistic approach to text and narrative from postmodern fiction and drama; from dance he took the art of spacing, tableau, the new multi-directionality and, most of all, the uses of repetition. Wilson understands how repetition can be hypnotic in effect, or the opposite, a device for making motion clearer, more object-like, and also how simultaneous repetition can enlarge what you see. Galvanising his resources in this way, he has become an international figure, acclaimed for his series of mammoth theatre pieces.

By these standards, *Hamletmachine,* based on the cast from Wilson's original New York production, is strikingly economical, both in means and in its two-hour timespan. But this concise play by the East German Heiner Müller suits Wilson's imagination well, a heterogeneous, world-view conceptualisation. Proposing theatre that engages in dialectic rather than being mimetic, Müller's is a freeform type of script that blurs the association of character with speech, quotes broadly from Eliot, Warhol, Coca-Cola ads, etc., while, in essence, it deals with post-war Germany and becomes, Müller says, 'a pamphlet against the illusion that one can stay innocent in this our world'.

The soul of Germany no longer resides in the pine forests and Romantics of popular imagination, but in the cultural and physical ashes of that nation in 1945. Like Germany, Hamlet never knows how to decide and always makes the wrong decisions when he does. Ophelia is the victim of his errors — the eternal wife, the future and seed of Germany (and Europe) — his parents the corrupt order that spurned him. The play is a sort of longing for absolution, but also a defiant piece of revolutionary theatre, attacking Marxist idols — Marx, Lenin and Mao are metaphorically toppled at the end of the play — as well as capitalists. (And thus, too, Müller negates his own authority as artist, indicating that his own photograph be torn up on stage.) In the end, Electra speaks to condemn 'the happiness of submission. Long live hate and contempt, rebellion and death' — a feminist exhortation to action against the indecision of men.

It is the structures in which Müller's attitudes are presented that seem to have interested Wilson, and he has assumed them in kind, from the multi-referential surface to the series of closed forms in which the play is constructed. Non-developmental, the play is written as a five-movement symphony, with movement three indicated, if mockingly, as a *scherzo*. Wilson's response is a conceptual *tour de force,* rigorously unsentimental as the subject matter demands. A movement - only prelude or theme (the 15 actors stepping in from the sidelines to fill the stage with frozen poses and strictly spaced, meticulously choreographed activity) precedes five variations on the text: the set scene repeated with expansions, as a point reached in the text suggests emphasis or development. This system moves round on itself, 90° clockwise for each variation, becoming the inexorable machine of the title.



Long live hate and rebellion: Allison De Salvo in *Hamletmachine*

There is a witch-like figure (death or destruction) on a revolving chair, joined by a girl who stands wistfully against a bare tree. Centre stage, three '40s women sit scratching a table in precise counterpoint, listening for noises, a tap on woodblocks effecting their swift response; the Hamlet figure is a slouching youth with exaggerated hip-swivelling walk who approaches a girl in martial-arts pose (Ophelia). Another lad in a Russian-lettered T-shirt drops a book and then bangs his head on the table. A character like a Moseley blackshirt raises his hand to an immense throng somewhere below. Finally, there is the entry of a gilded youth in shorts (Ariel or Nazi ideal), a woman in ball-gown, then an entirely blackened undertaker who places his hands over her eyes as if to extinguish the era that she represents.

But these are primarily object-actors, listed plainly in the programme as 'the man balancing on one leg', 'the woman at table no.2', and speaking stage directions as well as 'speeches'. They are further removed in the *scherzo,* where scene and text are projected on video. Characters become focused or disappear according to context. Likewise, while the general physical tone is nervy and harsh (forced smiles, neurotic mannerisms, self-inflicted pain), gestures and expressions have relative meaning, reinforcing, working ironically against the text or indeed remaining ambiguous. They too are part of the machine.

Hamletmachine moves slowly, as does all Wilson's work, but this acute *adagio* is never once oppressive — the detail of text and implications of the action need all the time that they are given. It is

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also irrelevant to speak of media mixing in a work such as this. No crude disjunction of elements here, only their most skilful and thorough interweaving. In material resource, not unlike much postmodern or New Dance today, *Hamletmachine* is a model of conceptual rigour. □

JAZZ

Hype and glory

Charles Fox

Out of Many, One People
JAZZ WARRIORS *Antilles*
Andy Sheppard
ANDY SHEPPARD *Antilles*
Everybody's Song but My Own
STAN SULZMAN & JOHN TAYLOR *Loose Tubes*
Frog Dance
LOL COXHILL *Impetus — 2 LPs*

IMAGE, AS EVERY advertiser knows, is half the battle. Courtney Pine's conquest of the media during 1987 has been aided by the way he looks the part: slim and lithe, a younger edition of Dexter or Rollins, his saxophone brandished like a trophy, the apotheosis of what, once upon a time, was known as being hip. The fact that in real life Pine happens to be an exceptionally good jazz player is a bonus for those of us more interested in music than style. So too has been his role in the formation of the Jazz Warriors, not the first all-black British big band — Ken 'Snakehips' Johnson led one until the Café de Paris was bombed in 1940; Leslie 'Jiver' Hutchinson ran another immediately after the war — but certainly the first made up almost entirely of young black musicians born in Britain.

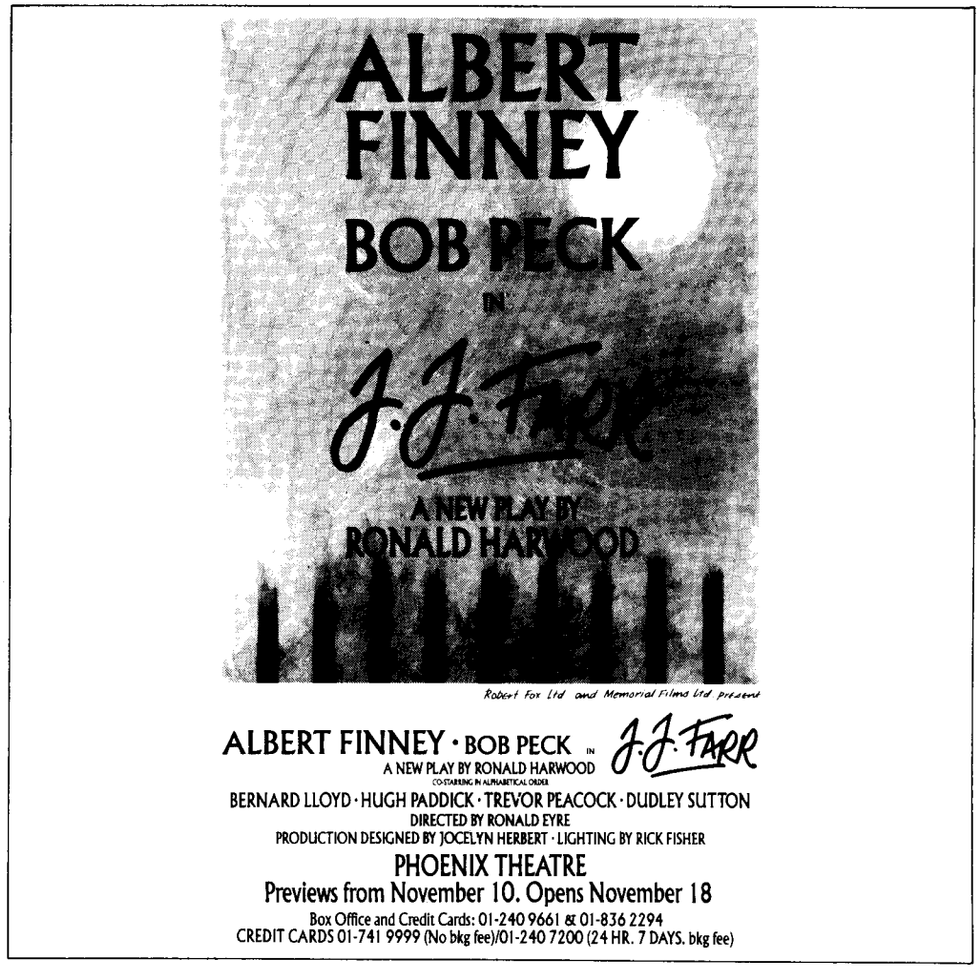
One of those exceptions is the trumpeter Harry Beckett, who came to Britain from the Caribbean in the '50s. But jostling around him are the likes of the flautist Philip Bent, perhaps the most substantial talent in this generation of black players, the vibraharpist Orphy Robinson and, of course, Courtney Pine. He plays only a couple of solos — one on soprano saxophone, the other on bass clarinet — on the Warriors' **Out of Many, One People,** recorded at the Shaw Theatre earlier this year. The routines offer occasional parallels with Mingus's: unwieldy adjectives in the narration prefacing 'In Reference To Our Forefathers' Fathers' Dreams', for instance, but also the benign tumult later on. Most of the time, though, this is a band concerned with launching soloists rather than creating an orchestral identity.

That may come later. So may a more daring amalgamation of reggae and soca and the other kinds of music used for dancing as much as for listening within Britain's black community. Meanwhile the emphasis is upon consolidation, just as it is with **Andy Sheppard**, inspired by, although never imitating, the John Coltrane Quartet of a quarter of a century ago. It's a matter of stance, of technical details — the modal see-sawing of 'Sol', the spraying of notes in 'Esme' — for Sheppard's use of the generic style is as particular to him as, say, Zoot Sims' was to Lester Young's. Slightly older than most of the musicians benefitting from the present burst of publicity, Sheppard is also the most mature, just about at his peak.

An encouraging fact about both his LP and the Jazz Warriors' is their lack of gimmicks or hard-sell. The music is allowed to work on its own terms. The Jazz Warriors were recorded in concert anyway (it shows in a few minor fluffs, all really adding to the atmosphere), while, apart from some overdubbing during 'Esme', Sheppard's group sounds just as it does at a gig. There are three guests: Orphy Robinson from the Warriors, trombonist Nick Evans and, on three tracks, the American trumpeter Randy Brecker. Incidentally, elderly buffs should take note that the opening item, 'Java Jive', has nothing to do with the Ink Spots' hit but is built around a Javanese scale. And the CD version offers an additional track, 'Ninoska's Waltz'.

One problem about the media taking up British jazz is the way they feel obliged to maintain that somehow the music has only just come to the boil. Two other albums show how mistaken that is. John Taylor, the pianist, and Stan Sulzman, playing tenor and soprano saxophones plus clarinet, flute and piccolo, have both been around since the '60s. Unlike Andy Sheppard or the Warriors, Dionysians to a man, this duo tilts towards the Apollonian: their music on **Everybody's Song but My Own** is thoughtful, reticent, yet capable of a swirling excitement ('Miold Man'), even — the trickiest musical feat of all — of being witty ('Gigolo'). Every piece was composed by the British musician most admired

Andy Sheppard: a man in his prime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by colleagues, Kenny Wheeler, better known as a trumpeter yet on this LP demonstrating how to be adventurous *in absentia*.

Adventurousness is almost a synonym for what Lol Coxhill gets up to, a quality celebrated in **Frog Dance**, a documentary film released in 1985. This pair of LP's contains the sound-track, with the chatter left out and much more music added. It ranges from the rococo richness summoned up as Coxhill descends, gallery by gallery, Vienna's Museum of Modern Art, to the belligerent split notes he contributes to a set by The Recedents (the trio's name describes the musicians' hair-styles).

Lol Coxhill has always used context to supplement content, exploiting local acoustics. So he competes with squawking cockatoos at the London Zoo and, at Digswell House Arts Centre, with what sounds like porridge being poured in the background. But his soprano playing with the Johnny Rondo Trio has a voluptuousness akin to Dame Clara Butt's, especially in the tune 'Frog Dance', not unlike one of those pieces that pit bands used to play for teams of jugglers. All of which may suggest an eccentric rather than one of Britain's most original jazz musicians — the latter of which Lol Coxhill certainly is. But devotees of the TV crime series *Bullman* will know just how cunningly he can sneak up on you. At twice the age of the average Jazz Warrior, Lol continues to enlighten, to amuse and, blissfully, like the best and barmiest of poets, to outrage. □

TELEVISION

Fancy poultry

Hugo Williams

'AND THERE'S LESTER PIGGOTT on the inside . . . He's on the inside . . . He's still on the inside . . .' That was the best joke in the first of a new series of **Spitting Image** (ITV), where not even Keith Best had bothered to apply for shares in British Panic and the bodies of upwardly mobile suicides fell upwards past windows. The Michael Jackson contract was actually bloodier on the new hit-or-miss, take-off revue *Copy Cats* (ITV), curtain raiser to *Blind Date* (ITV) the hit-or-miss meat market that I sometimes notice watching me on Saturday evenings.

Better known than most of their originals, the caricatures on *Spitting Image* are now having to caricature themselves to make their points. Edwina Currie has had her mouth widened, for instance, and 'We've had to keep making new Michael Jacksons as his face gets whiter and bits fall off him'. The two old Davids were slightly out of date with their impersonation of Dud'n'Pete singing 'Until we meet again some sunny day' ('I think not, David'), but not weatherman Ian McCaskell, reassuring the country of a calm night as a hurricane tore through the studio.

The South Bank Show (ITV) is a natural continuation of **Spitting Image**, with subjects like Maria Callas and The Smiths appearing as themselves. Callas, ultimate queen of the tabloids, is pure latex. An ugly duckling with a weight problem, she gargled her way to fame and beauty, fell for a shipping thug and died of a broken heart aged 53. She made Onassis famous and respectable — shameful home-movies of Churchill on board the *Christina* — but he treated her like a servant, destroyed her confidence and dumped her for a later model. He even made her buy half a cargo boat. In later life, Callas acknowledged the disfiguring pulsation of her raucous upper register but, from what I could hear, it was always there, an awful out-of-time wobble which people like me cannot distinguish from a joke. She seems to have done pretty well considering.

Upwardly mobile gamine: Suzanne Vega smiling wistfully all the way to the South Bank Show

Despite its location, *The South Bank Show* is about popularity, not art. Aiming for the latter and missing, The Smiths achieved the former by default in the-non-sexist wastes of studentdom with lyrics like 'Oh you handsome devil, let me get my hands on your mammary glands' and 'My girlfriend's in a coma, I know it's serious, do you think she'll pull through?' After hearing singer Morrissey you may feel that this is unlikely, though many potential suicides do find comfort in his brand of limp daffodil-pop: 'When it all gets too much, thank God there's still Morrissey coming out of your speakers.' Rock critic Nick Kent went so far as to say that in ten years The Smiths would be viewed in the same way as The Beatles are viewed today. He would stake what remained of his critical reputation on it, he said. Bravado, surely?

Why Joni Mitchell and/or Paul Simon — or, better still, almost any other living singer — aren't good enough for Suzanne Vega's many, quiet little fans twiddling knobs in their bedsitting-rooms is a mystery. Perhaps it is her surname, or her terribly non-carnivorous lyrics — 'Fancy poultry parts for sale . . .' — that appeal to the New Squeamishness? Though unexceptionable, nothing she sang or said on the latest *SBS* explained her presence there, unless it was the cultural caesura repeatedly referred to in the first half of the programme by *NY Times* drama critic Frank Rich, well caffeined-up in Sardi's with reaction shots of Melvyn Bragg to heal the caesuras in his own cultural splurge.

New York was going through a bad patch, said Frank Rich in about a thousand times as many words. People looked like bankers. Where were the hip crowd you used to see at La Mama? Real estate was the porn of the yuppies and most theatres and museums were threatened by their own higher value as offices. 'It's about time for a new series of questions to be raised but right now we don't have the art that's raising them.' We certainly didn't have the television last Sunday. Was Frank earning his lunch? For 'our last conversation' — a hint that there may have been more than one lunch on offer — Bragg launched him on the safer waters of Aids-talk. Aids, we learnt, 'would change the *terms* of the debate about culture. It might even [but the lunch wasn't good enough] change the *content* of that culture.' That 'people can't really begin writing about conventional mores without Aids filtering in' seemed a pretty wobbly table for Frank to be eating off, but perhaps it was the café filtre talking by then. He hit a winner when he compared the disease to Vietnam. Like a burnt chestnut, it was one of those concepts it's wiser to pass on to your nearest neighbour as quickly as possible than tangle with yourself, so I offer it to you here.

There was once a Golden Age when people didn't look like bankers. Ralph Steadman was on **Review** (BBC2) to prove it with a pair of thoroughly hip, flapping-soled shoes that had once belonged to Jann Wenner, revisionist editor of *Rolling Stone* magazine. Wenner wears more sensible shoes today. 'I see nothing wrong with taking ads from the Pentagon. I see nothing wrong with National Service. The charge of selling out I just can't take seriously.' Wenner has moved with the times. 'Essentially what he is doing,' shreiked an ex-colleague, 'is sending people out to get killed.' If this is really the case, it seems surprising that his subscription list is looking so healthy.

Most wonderful programme of the week was **Baka — People of the Rainforest** (C4), a two-hour mini-series which proved that the human race has had elements of soap opera in it since the first Iron Age, where these pygmies of West Cameroon still more or less live. Sorcery takes the place of money in their power struggle, but man's scandalous desire for more than one woman remains constant. □

Judith Williamson is ill this week, but hopes to be back in *NS* 13 November.

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OPERA

Iskra

Andrew Clements

The Electrification of the Soviet Union
NIGEL OSBORNE *Apollo, Oxford; further performances Southampton (7 Nov), Manchester (14 Nov), Birmingham (21 Nov)*

NIGEL OSBORNE'S new opera, commissioned for Glyndebourne by the BBC and first seen down in Sussex a month ago, offers a densely allusive, visually striking piece of music theatre. It is not without problems of coherence and continuity, but allotting the responsibility for those defects between the composer, the librettist Craig Raine and the director Peter Sellars is far from easy.

Raine's text was published by Faber last year. It seemed then a beautifully worked piece of dramatic writing, drawing together its sources — Pasternak's novella known in English translation as *The Last Summer* and his still untranslated autobiographical poem *Spectorsky* — into a skilful and highly singable form. For an opera the pacing and weight of the words was finely calculated and the interlocking of easy conversational lines of dialogue with set-piece songs, in which Raine was able to release the full richness of his Martian imagery, seemed to offer a musical potential that realised what Osborne had perceived in Pasternak's original as a 'symphonic' quality

The events of the novella are slender: a young poet Serezha Spectorsky (the Pasternak *Doppelganger)* goes off to visit his revolutionary sister in a provincial Russian town in 1916. While there he remembers the events of the summer of 1914 when he was tutor to a wealthy Moscow family, the Frestlns, and fell in love with the household's governess Anna Arild, a passion that he consummated in nights spent with the prostitute Sashka. The First World War and the impending Revolution have swept away that time 'when life appeared to pay heed to individuals'. An epilogue to the opera moves forward to 1920: the Frestln family has disappeared, their house has been confiscated, and Anna has become a party functionary. Serezha is implicated with the Frestlns, but Anna promises to destroy the evidence.

In his libretto Raine describes his conception not as drama but 'poetic film'. Scenes are sharply intercut, transitions abandoned, and though the

COMMENT

WHO, BESIDES ITS shareholders and, more doubtfully, its 12,500 employees, has any idea what Booker plc does?

Having in my possession a menu from last Thursday's Booker Prize Presentation Dinner, I can tell you that it does quite a lot: there's Booker Cash and Carry, Booker Seeds, Booker Health Foods, Booker Frozen Foods (though not, as yet, Booker Frozen Health Foods), Booker Agriculture International and Booker Overseas Trading. The business also owns, among others, Holland & Barrett, Kingswood Chemists, McConnell Salmon, Middlebrook Mushrooms and — believe this or not — Agatha Christie. It appears that Booker bought in to her copyright in 1964 and now owns a 64 per cent share in the best selling crime writer ever.

And still most people know only that Booker awards an annual fiction prize: this year, £15,000 to Penelope Lively for *Moon Tiger.*

This fact has been even more generally known since 1984, when C4 began regular coverage of the Booker Prize Presentation Dinner: 30 minutes of TV exposure beamed in, last year, to 609,000 viewers. At a total cost of £60,000-£70,000 per prize, someone must have punched calculator buttons and concluded that, as advertising goes, a shrewd investment had been made.

Yet what, besides the business's existence, has been advertised? No one can pretend that Middlebrook Mushrooms have suddenly become a household name, or that frozen fishfingers now mean Booker rather than Bird's Eye or Findus. It's clear that the promotions people had something other in mind. In *Family Fortunes* (Hutchinson) Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall have argued that domestic piety was the means by which Victorian industrialists cleansed their souls of materialism. Similarly, Waldemar Januszczak (*NS* 14 August) has suggested that Thatcher's materialists use *art* as their spiritual fix. But, in allying its name with literature, Booker — along with all those companies now filling the gap deliberately created by Thatcher's policy on arts funding — is doing much more than washing the grime of capital from its hands. It is also showing its business peers, investors, politicians and the media just how successful it is.

Last week's dinner at the City's Guildhall demonstrated this beautifully. In his welcome to the guests — from a high table whose star attractions were not literati but Neil Kinnock, Glynis Kinnock and Richard Luce, the Arts Minister — the Chairman of Booker thanked for their attendance 'our friends from the city, politics, publishing and the media' (that order). Some time later he thought to mention the novelists, without whom . . . at which an audience largely drawn from the City, politics, etc. gave a fat chuckle.

In painful contrast, when P.D James — chair of this year's Booker judges and battling chairman (her title, I'm afraid) of the Society of Authors — used her speech to urge for greater spending on Public Lending right, to plead for books to be spared VAT (with which they are currently threatened by the European Commission) and to warn of the dangers to authors from all those international publishing mergers, not only had the TV cameras stopped turning but the clapping was spattered round the hall. As novelist Antonia Byatt said, with feeling, if not *total* accuracy, this was scarcely surprising since she and Melvyn Bragg were the only authors there.

The fingertip connection with the arts is an old way for people to communicate their wealth. And portrait painters, landscape gardeners, musicians, choreographers, sonneteers — in short, almost every creative artist who hasn't been possessed of private income — have benefitted from the arrangement. More to the point, I can think of no society that hasn't recognised the need to subsidise its artists: whether by allowing them time off from the business of hunting and gathering, or through the church, the local prince, the crown, the state or the patronage of wealthy individuals. Is the Tory plan for more and more business sponsorship inherently worse? Is it anything other than snobbishness to sneer at the *Royal Insurance* Shakespeare Company? Is it anything more than knee-jerk leftery to find distasteful the sponsorship of pacifist Oskar Kokoschka's paintings by United Technologies Corporation, an arms manufacturer?

Yes, I would argue: business sponsorship isn't so much distasteful as dangerous. Most obviously, it threatens to encourage the classy-but-not-too-disturbing. Keri Hulme must be the only unknown author to have won the Booker, for example; while other recent winners (Anita Brookner, Kingsley Amis and Lively) have not, whatever their virtues, been radical or innovative artists by the time that they got the prize. And there again, the prize's stated aims — 'to reward merit, raise the stature of the author in the eyes of the public and increase the sales of the books' — are scarcely designed to provoke artistic and intellectual excitement. Why should they be? The prize is a commercial, as is all business sponsorship.

On the other side, inevitably, business sponsorship is wary of the local, experimental, controversial — which means, among many other things, that too many talented arts administrators are wasting their time in the never-ending courtship (and placating) of business PR persons. One artist courting one patron may have found it frustrating, and may well have had to make compromises, but at least the cards were more evenly stacked and at least the chances of coming across an eccentric with vision, or trust, were much greater.

Hamlet, the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, Beethoven's *Pathétique,* Joyce's *Ulysses:* these were all the product of royal, church or individual patronage. Clearly however, in democratic cultures it's more appropriate for democratic bodies to be the artists' source of subsidy. Equally clearly, it would be absurd to suggest that artists, their managers and unions simply turn their back on whatever of its profits business now chooses to toss them. But they do need to realise the inadequacy of these cake crumbs and to put their minds to what system of subsidy might, should saner times return, be of maximum benefit not only to them but their publics.

Which times might be closer than we think. One warning came last Sunday night on ITV's *South Bank Show,* where New York critic Frank Rich described the deadly effects of the yuppification of artistic life in his city: theatres dark on Broadway, museums turned to funfairs, a total dearth of ideas. The other came in the same day's *Observer,* which announced that shares in Royal Insurance have plummeted by 26.7 per cent. How long before the luxury of Shakespeare becomes too expensive for the company to maintain?

Harriett Gilbert

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more detailed stage directions are not realised in Sellars' production (for instance, the original scheme makes a great deal of use of film) the action still moves with the jagged, heightened sense of realism implied by the scenario. George Tsypin's set — walls that move organically, always changing shape, an electric railway that shunts to and fro above the stage — abets Sellars' parade of vivid imagery; the opera's historical frame of reference is often stunningly expanded, its cultural allusions provided with a memorable resonance.

The programme notes are headed by Lenin's observation that 'Communism is Soviet Power plus the electrification of the whole country'. While the Revolution will carry that electrification forward, Serezha sees his surroundings with surreal intensity; his emotions, his poetry, will electrify that personal world. It is that polarity between the worlds of reality and imagination — which lies at the heart of the Pasternak and at the core of the opera — that Sellars illuminates so intensely: every gesture and visual detail is applied to that end. Where the production perhaps fails to 'explain' the opera as much as it might is in its moments of stasis, when real and imaginary time collide, and where the more severe intercutting strains the narrative thread to the limit of comprehension.

Given visual and verbal dimensions of such pungency it would have been all too easy for Osborne's music to disappear into the background, relegated to the role of accompaniment. That does not happen; indeed, his contribution seems the least problematic, most successful of the three collaborators. Its language comes as a considerable surprise to anyone familiar with his music of the last ten years; much of it is unabashedly tonal —the song with which Pasternak himself launches the opera, together with its rhyming scheme ('The breast is abolished today, /the rifle is polished today.') comes astonishingly close to Sondheim, yet its integration into the work, as well as later set pieces for Natasha, Anna and Sashka, is beautifully done. Elsewhere the music seems intent on evoking its own historical echoes — a prominent wind figure irresistibly conjures memories of Debussy — but the idiom somehow remains intact. Osborne's response to the most extravagant of Raine's metaphors in Serezha's later 'electric' songs is to surround their verbal fireworks — 'I have invented snows: /soft demerara sugar, pastry, /sorbet, wet salt, cocaine' — with glinting translucent webs of sound that do not attempt to rival their intrinsic brilliance. It is altogether a highly intelligent, mature achievement, with a genuine dramatic grip and purpose.

It is also a production that has been realised with enormous commitment by Glyndebourne Touring Opera. The leading roles are without exception well taken — Omar Ebrahim's Serezha, Anna Steiger's Sashka, Henry Herford's Pasternak and, particularly, Elizabeth Laurence's compelling Anna; Elgar Howarth conducts the London Sinfonietta with meticulous attention to detail, solving the problems of balance between stage, pit and the tape sounds with composure. The production comes to London for a semi-staging at the Elizabeth Hall in December, but its full richness really ought to be caught on tour.

Books

Contrary to revisionist myths, not everyone wore flares in '68. A 'man bites dog' photo, as we say in the trade, outside the US Embassy

HO-HO-HO CHI MINH

Summer's here and the time is right

Nigel Fountain

Street Fighting Years
TARIQ ALI *Collins* £12.95

IS IT THE right title? Mick Jagger joined the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign marchers as they moved on Grosvenor Square in March 1968 and, hey presto, two months later, out popped 'Street Fighting Man' and thus, I suppose, the cue for the title of Tariq Ali's autobiography. Yet brooding on his entertaining reminiscences of those times my mind slipped to a 1964 waxing by the West Coast's Beach Boys, who reported that they were getting tired of going down the same old strip and were going to find a new place where the kids were hip. There isn't really very much *fighting* in *Street Fighting Years*, but boy, Ali can — and does — say he Got Around.

Indeed, the only restriction on his movement seems to have been the attention of the then Home Secretary, James Callaghan. The risk of losing his residency in Britain deterred the author from joining the action on the Paris barricades in May 1968. 'To have missed Paris that spring,' he writes, 'was unforgiveable.'

Well, up to a point; Lenin missed February 1917 so had the whole show rerun with a new script in October, and Mao had the good fortune to miss the Shanghai massacre in 1927. History, when it gets round to checking its files, will probably absolve Ali for his absence.

He can be an informative, funny, and illuminating writer. His description of childhood and adolescence in the hybrid state of Pakistan in the 1950s and early '60s is fascinating. The state floated between the Empire's legacy and the arrival of American imperialism, and was rooted in uncertain military rule. His upper-class family floated between memories of partition, faith in Stalin and uncertainty about the new world, and new colonial uprisings.

That experience, I guess, provides him with a breadth of vision and a sympathy with struggle across the globe singularly lacking from most other British socialists. But what it doesn't free him from is an often exasperating inability to take the piss out of himself. When not ruminating on the Beach Boys, my reference point turned to those military memoirs so beloved of the *Sunday Times* during Ali's — and my — childhood. Had it been the memoirs of Major-General Sir Tariq Ali MC, DSO I would not have been greatly surprised.

Having arrived in England, and Oxford University in the early '60s, we find him rapidly assuming command of the Oxford Union before a posting under Julian Critchley at Michael Heseltine's *Town* magazine. By then the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and its ubiquitous organiser Ralph Schoenman was on hand to provide him with field service in Prague, Hanoi

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and Bolivia. Much of this, too, is fascinating, including the information that his access to an imprisoned Régis Debray in Bolivia was obtained via a deftly forged credential from *Town* complete with a bogus signature from Heseltine. Should the Tory in better times rub shoulders with the now born-again rightist Debray in some vulgar act of diplomacy they might pause to think of the man who first brought them into peripheral contact in Che Guevara's mountain graveyard all those years ago.

Pausing is not really Ali's style. News from Vietnam demanded 'immediate responses'; arrival in Berlin meant immediate briefings from German SDS leaders; he would go 'straight from the LSE' to top level discussions on distribution of the *Black Dwarf*. Throughout, 'politics had to remain in command'.

But what politics? Talking on the 1960s underground recently Germaine Greer noted that everybody thought that the revolution — whatever that might be — was going to be easy. On the one hand Ali's travels wised him up to the violence, the horror, the tenacity that parts of those radical movements of the times were confronting and displaying. Yet his travels were those of a member of the upper classes won to radicalism, and despite the Trotskyism he had espoused by 1968 — or possibly because of it — the workers remain largely offstage in a world of Tynans, Sartres and Schoenmans, with the odd eccentric aristocrat thrown in. It had practical implications: while the media ritualistically identified Ali as the 'leader' of the VSC, the International Socialists beavered away within its structures and picked up for their cause what recruits there were to be found.

Which, as the tide of revolution ebbed, left Tariq Ali — together, it should be said, with plenty of others — marooned on a sectarian sandbank shouting vainly for a pick-up from the Labour boat he had correctly rejected back in the days of Che. There are still heroic guerrillas, but no Debrays bother to write about them, and the radicalism has gone out of chic.

It hasn't, however, gone out of Ali, as in the closing pages of the book he details some of the legion lost to the right, and those like Clive Goodwin — the inspiration behind the *Black Dwarf* and much that was good in '60s London left politics — who just died. Gone are the theses from the Fourth International that concluded his 1970s *1968 and After*, and gone too is the author from the now dormant — or extinct? — International Marxist Group, its always feeble British arm. But he fortunately has forgotten nothing, and learned some things along the way.

I was never much of a reader of *Town*. '*Marxism Today*,' Ali suggests, ' . . . celebrates bourgeois existence far more forcefully than *Town* ever did.' Which would, he concludes, disqualify Critchley as a potential *MT* apparatchik. An interesting thesis. One way and another a job on *Town* seems to have been a guarantee of a one-way ticket to political oblivion. But that is a conclusion that its one-time proprietor, and Ali its erstwhile drama critic, would doubtless and perhaps accurately contest. 'History has not yet given us her final verdict on the century that is approaching its end,' says the author. No, but the bloody jury's been out long enough. □

TELEVISION

The draughtsman's contacts

Phillip Whitehead

One in Four
MICHAEL KUSTOW *Chatto* £12.95

K IS HAVING his portrait painted. It takes about a year. Intermittently he sees it, worries about how much it reveals of his search for identity, esteem and role models. Meanwhile he paints another portrait, a rather good one, of the growing pains of a new institution. His friends will finger through the index to see what they are doing in this *galère*. There are Mario Vargas Llosa, John Lloyd, Andrew Lloyd-Webber, Ken Loach and Loose Tubes to play them along. What do they have in common? They are the people of Kustow's universe, the world of the Commissioning Editor for Arts Programmes, Channel Four.

Michael Kustow's previous book *Tank* dealt with the break-up of his first marriage and his frenetic three years as Director of the ICA in the embers of the 1960s. There he was K, observing this other self with a painful honesty. Now he has come out, in a diary of a year of Channel Four. The obsessions remain: the search for identity among the English insiders, for father figures, for the security of a contract renewed and an achievement recognised. The book has come out fast. Many of the commissioning and purchasing decisions of 1985/86 are only now appearing on screen, like *Shoah* and *V*. Others await their turn: the celebrations of 1968, the *Mahabharata* of Peter Brook. And in a conscious apeing of television's time-shifts Kustow pauses, freezes, plays back his narrative to his painter friend Tom Phillips for comment. The book feeds on itself.

Channel Four was very special. Maybe still is. It had a benevolent autocrat in Jeremy Isaacs, capable of backing his hunch that a small commissioning staff, some from outside television, would unlock a whole new range of talents, would reach the disinherited with the remit to be distinctive, to innovate as a first and continuing principle. It also had a secure and expanding source of finance, from the subscriptions of the ITV companies, and the great good luck that press attacks on it in the early days were diverted to *TVAM*. Michael Kustow was recruited as one of the original band, and his account is the best we are likely to get for some time of what those early days were like.

Commissioning editors are midwives, not mothers. Sometimes they can claim paternity too. Their relationship with the independent programme-makers was initially distorted by the fact that the Channel was the only buyer around. Inevitably they were accused of favouritism if they stuck with their early contacts, of betrayal if they did not. Some were better at answering letters than others. One or two reminded me of the elderly MP of my acquaintance who used to throw his unopened mail into the waste bin saying: 'If it's important they'll write again.' So it is valuable to

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have a proper account of what it was like on the other side, knowing that everyone would hustle you, that the price of discovery was a nodding acquaintance with every kind of obsessive.

How well has Kustow made out? The Channel Four arts job was the most glittering prize of all. His aim was 'not simply the arts on television, but television that is shaped by the insights and practice of art and artists'. He wanted to turn them loose among television's mysteries, literally like Hockney with the electronic Paintbox, or by the visual enhancement which the medium can give. Some of the best programmes succeeded as well or better than anything done on television before. His critics might say that in fusing two forms he found little new talent. The father figures like Peter Brook, the established maestros like Tony Palmer, got a goodly share of what was on offer. Prestigious projects ate up the annual budget. The diary marks hits and misses, and good ideas that mismatched. For example, he writes of an early conversation about *UK Late*, the recent late-night chat show, that it would have to be able to react to events up to the day of transmission. This excellent instinct got temporarily lost along the way and the programme found itself on air on the day the *London Daily News* folded, with a programme on the press and a journalist from the paper, but all solemnly pre-recorded a week before.

Throughout this book, as the two portraits come into being, the other preoccupation of the Channel Four staff emerges. Could it last? Privatisation, and the change in the interpretation of the remit which an eye on the market rating would bring, grew from a distant threat to a studied possibility. The commissioning editors' thoughts about how their role would change, reported here, ought to be given due weight before their success is put in jeopardy. It's no surprise that the final version of Kustow's portrait by Tom Phillips was preoccupied and solemn.

Kustow was lucky to be one of the pilgrim fathers of Charlotte Street, and he used that good fortune well. Serendipity was a word he popularised at the ICA in the '60s. Without wanting to suggest that Jeremy Isaacs' personal style was without hazard, this account will leave the future researcher from the Berlusconi Institute, doing his thesis on television as a lost cultural form, a sense of what the Channel was for those who worked in it and for it — Serendip, and the sudden closeness of distant horizons. □

SHORT STORIES

Persuasion

Michelene Wandor

Best Short Stories 1987
ed. GILES GORDON and DAVID HUGHES
Heinemann £10.95
Fast Lanes
JAYNE ANNE PHILLIPS *Faber* £8.95
***In* Blackberry Time**
SID CHAPLIN *Bloodaxe* £12.95 & £5.95
Tribaliks
HENRI LOPES trans. ANDREA LESKES *Heinemann* £3.95

SEARCH AS ONE MIGHT, read between the lines as one may, Gordon and Hughes play their editorial cards pretty close to their chest. 'Best' stories? What are the criteria? The closest they will go is to say that 'Each . . . is of its kind persuasive'.

But a thoroughly careful reading of **Best Short**

SHELF LIFE

IF, AS I greatly fear, the US Embassy is a smouldering ruin by the time you read this, no blame whatsoever can be attached to publishers William Collins. They did their best. When Tariq Ali suggested that the launch party for his 'autobiography of the Sixties', *Street Fighting Years* (reviewed this week), be held not in some Soho wine bar but in Grosvenor Square, Collins' publicity department were bemused but agreeable. Mere toddlers in '68, they vaguely assumed the book was about the Rolling Stones; certainly they couldn't be expected to know that Ali was once ringleader of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, preaching violent revolution, the establishment of soviets and the abolition of money.

Luckily, there are those at Collins with longer memories — senior management who realised that Ali's real aim in booking the Hotel Britannia, a stone's throw from the Embassy, was to get innocent literati like Hermione Lee and Blake Morrison so drunk they could be manipulated into storming the building as 100,000 crazed demonstrators had nearly done 20 years before. They immediately banned the 'party'. But was it too late? For Ali then decided to organise his own, independent gathering in the same place. As we go to press, there are rumours that he is inviting *Nicaraguans*. If the worst happened, you read it here last.

More apocalyptic predictions from Italy, where they have topped the usual old Ends of Authors, Narratives, Politics and History with the End of the Book — in the physical rather than epistemological sense. An article in the weekly *Espresso* outlined the problem: 'A school student in 2030 who wants to consult the first edition of *If On a Winter's Night a Traveller* will discover the book is disintegrating . . .' You may wonder how many schoolkids are likely to consult first editions of Calvino, even in Italy, but the point, according to *Espresso*, is that books printed since the war have a very limited life — and one that's getting shorter because of developments in paper manufacture coupled with worsening atmospheric pollution. Paper, apparently, is now pH acid (whereas before it was neutral) — something to do with the lignin content: this acidity reacts with the acidity in the air and in a few decades the result is brown, brittle pages. To substitute neutral paper would be prohibitively expensive. Can this be true? A new paperback from Cornell University suggests that the crisis has been recognised in the States: 'The paper in this book,' it says on the title page, 'is acid-free and meets the guidelines for permanence and durability of the Committee on Production Guidelines for Book Longevity of the Council on Library Resources.'

Meanwhile, in his own weekly column in *Espresso*, Umberto Eco — never one to miss a controversy — argues that the answer is plastic books. Publishers Mondadori, anticipating him, have just produced the first inflatable plastic book, *Libidine*, by Roberto d'Agostino. This 'guide to physical and moral degeneration' features a large naked woman on the cover. Blow into a hole in the back cover and, presumably, she gets larger still. Every literary milestone is also a monument to barbarism, as Walter Benjamin might have put it.

New light has been thrown on the mystery of a 'lost' Benjamin manuscript, and on the last hours of his life, by Lisa Fittko's *Le Chemin des Pyrénées*, recently published in France and Germany. Fittko, a German Jew who helped organise the escape to Spain of many anti-fascist refugees, was Benjamin's guide across the mountains in 1940. Refused a visa by Spanish frontier guards, Benjamin committed suicide (an act which incidentally saved the lives of his travelling companions, by embarrassing the frontier police enough to let them through). Fittko's account confirms what had before only been a rumour, that Benjamin — whom she describes as excessively polite, hopelessly impractical, unable to drink a cup of coffee without spilling it — was carrying a manuscript which he guarded with his life. It has never been found and speculation continues as to whether it was a new work or simply another copy of his *Theses on Philosophy and History* which, unknown to Benjamin, had already been saved.

Best magazine this week is the 400th edition of *Cahiers du Cinéma* (£6.30 from some international newsagents or by post from Editions de l'Etoile, 9 passage de la Boule Blanche, 75012 Paris). At each centenary since the magazine started in 1951, the editors have paid special homage to their *auteur* of the moment: Cocteau, Langlois, Godard. Now it's Wim Wenders, who was asked to compile a celebratory supplement — in fact a separate magazine — in which he and 30 other directors describe films they wish they had made, or ideas which became films. There are extracts, too, from never-produced scripts: Dreyer's *Mary Stuart*, Welles' *The Cradle Will Rock*, Truffaut's *L'Agence Magic*. The directors all share, for Wenders, the inheritance of that 'great memory-work' that was once the task of poets and painters, now swamped by 'the inflation of meaningless electronic images'. The supplement contains memorable fragments and pictures, from Godard, Agnès Varda, Chantal Akerman, Sam Fuller *et al*, and background material on Wenders' new film *Wings of Desire*. And some intriguing questions. What would Bertolucci's version of Hammett's *Red Harvest* have been like? Or Fellini's *Decameron* if Pasolini hadn't beaten him to it? Or Powell's *The Tempest*, with Mia Farrow as Ariel?

Malcolm Imrie

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Stories 1987 reveals certain elements in common. A number of stories deal with the ironies and ambiguities of old age. Many of them contain mystery: fantasy/ghosts/unexplained magic in the everyday from Beryl Bainbridge, E. A. Markham and Janice Elliott. Formally, many stories simply end at a point of poise — the animation and imagination left suspended, the plot left deliberately un-rounded. This subtlety gives the collection a lyrical air, with the stories like poems that function as catharsis, their outcomes to be savoured in the unconscious. Even if the editors are too shy to come analytically clean, the book vindicates the genre.

The world inhabited by Jayne Anne Phillips' characters in **Fast Lanes** is, in itself, an unfinished world, peopled by bums, itinerants and outcasts who find passing soul-mates on occasion and on the road. Although, by their very natures, none of these characters has a life that moves in conventional arcs, none of the stories feels at all unfinished or suspended. Each takes a discrete phase, and its author rounds it off in such a way that an entire life is encapsulated in a single episode. This works superbly because Phillips is absolutely in control of the gears of each voice, from the (literal) monologue of Mickey, who tells his life-story to a current pick-up, to the desperation of Billy and Kato, as told by one of their peers. Desperation and survival are the twin poles of Phillips' subjects, with some recurrent preoccupations in the leitmotifs of much loved brothers, older women returning to careers and, again and again, understanding and trusting love which appears able to come into being only when separation is on the horizon. Phillips is a writer of devastating delicacy.

The collection of fiction, non-fiction and poetry in **In Blackberry Time** is a loving memorial to the self-educated former miner, Sid Chaplin. The extracts chosen range from the late 1930s until his death in 1986 and the book is structured with short biographical sections telling his life story as we read. The book is thus a kind of collective biography, a personal album which is also the picture of a place and of a gritty, working-class social history. Some of the pieces are clearly chosen for this value alone, rather than for any directly literary purpose, but many are told with a frank irony which goes way beyond the worthy intention of telling life 'as it really is' — notably the story of the old man who walked the rest of his family off their exhausted feet, and Chaplin's own account of his father's reluctance to shave an old friend who had just died.

Finally, **Tribaliks**, which is an extraordinarily difficult book to judge. These are contemporary Congolese stories, written after the 1963 revolution, and valiantly aiming to catch the contradiction between the old and the new: the minister who makes public speeches about the emancipation of women, and privately oppresses them; the wet nurse whose own children die while she looks after whitey's offspring. They are awkward, sincere tales, with simple morals, perhaps very suitable for their home consumption. Here they speak of different places with different values, and one person's agitprop can so easily become another's cliché. It's best perhaps to read them with support and interest and leave final judgment to an audience better able to assess their usefulness. □

POETRY

In this world

John Lucas

Cat's Whisker
PHILIP GROSS *Faber* £9.95
Between Leaps: Poems 1972-1985
BRAD LEITHAUSER *Oxford* £5.95
The Ballad of the Yorkshire Ripper
BLAKE MORRISON *Chatto* £4.95
Natural Causes
ANDREW MOTION *Chatto* £4.95
Legend of True Labour
SIMON LAPINGTON *Secker* £5

PHILIP GROSS's **Cat's Whisker** starts from where *The Ice Factory* left off. That enjoyable and very promising first volume showed him to be ready to push beyond the kind of poem he could obviously do well. Although *Cat's Whisker* isn't entirely rid of the death of the naturalist — there's a less than compelling piece of Wordsworthiana called 'Questions, Questions' — enough is happening to show that Gross isn't resting content.

Discontent, in fact, is more to the point. There's the discontent of those poems which deal with the bomb or more generally with death; and there are other, more shadowy and perhaps more imaginatively commanding ways in which it becomes the subject of the itch from which a poem grows. Growth is important. Gross has developed a very fine narrative manner, a way of telling a story — in no matter how short a space — so that the apparently casual scatter of details and indirections of the telling finally impact with great power. 'The Nearest Place to Nowhere' is, for example, a seemingly slight ballad about a lighthouse keeper who goes off his head — well, 'flips his lid' — dies, and is buried by his two mates down a hole in the rocks on which they're perched above the sea. But then 'a boom like a gun/shivered us like rotten wood'

> and the stone flipped up like a bottle top
> and there comes old John Todd,
> punched up, head first, on a fist of foam,
> going up to meet his God.
>
> Well, it may have been a blow-hole,
> a trick of the turning tide,
> a fluke of a tale like Jonah's whale,
> but this I know: when it's time to go
> there's nowhere you can hide.

I think the final lines are to be regretted, if only because they spell out something which would be better left implicit. They also hint at something that's less than satisfactory about several of the poems: the way in which they conclude with a clipped laconicism which suggests that they've been leading, all too plainly, in that direction. This threatens the achievement of such otherwise successful poems as 'Breton Dances' and 'Everything Must Go' and straitens other poems, including 'Son and Heir' and 'Boys Fishing', whose broodings on mortality collapse into predictability. Yet, having said this, I need immediately to add that Gross's best poems, accessible and for the most part about matters of common concern, ought to be of common interest.

Brad Leithauser is also accessible and a poet who enjoys putting his technical skills on parade. As with most parades, it means that a good deal of time is spent with the spectator/reader looking on and thinking 'all that spit and polish — what's it *for*, exactly?' This seems to me especially true of those poems which are about or inspired by Japan, and which set up a series of pagoda-like structures in order to show what can be done by way of syllable and rhyme. But we already know: Marianne Moore showed us how and she had rather more to say about her chosen subjects than Leithauser does about his.

However, it would be churlish to deny that what he does he invariably does well; and that his more relaxed stories-in-verse are entirely readable. In **Between Leaps** I particularly like his accounts of 'Two Summer Jobs' — 'Mine's a small yet adequate domain./Three mornings a week I hold court/on two courts beside the railroad track' — and the poem with which this selection opens, 'The Ghost of a Ghost'.

The best poems in Blake Morrison's recent **The Ballad of the Yorkshire Ripper** certainly don't do that. They include 'The Kiss' and 'On Sizewell Beach', the latter of which is so authentically good that it will surely become one of those poems by which we identify the 1980s (a fate which Morrison may not wish for, but which I don't see how he can avoid). It's about the ever-present fear of nuclear disaster and the much more immediate fear of a father's losing his child, and the details are so unerringly placed, the tone so exactly judged, that it provides every reason for buying the volume. As does 'The Kiss', a tiny fable/metaphor presumably written after the American bombing of Libya, courtesy of Thatcher, whose first three-line stanza records a near-brush between the poet's car and a Buick — 'our wing- mirrors kissing in a Suffolk lane' — and whose second and last stanza imagines England 'like a gun set on a table,/still smoking, waiting to be loaded again.' About the long title poem I do, however, have my doubts. It isn't that I question the propriety of Morrison's intentions: if Yorkshire dialect does contain a clutch of words that betray the appalling misogynism which fuelled Sutcliffe's murderous ambitions, then there can be no objection against trying to work out where that leads. Nor, I think, can there be any objection to the timing of the poem. (When will it become proper to write about the implications of *The Herald of Free Enterprise*?) I do, however, think that the person who tells the tale and who claims to love women 'for misen, like' is dangerously near to a kind of stooge Yorkshireman and that this reduces the poem to a well-meaning but simplistic thesis. Still, the work that's gone into producing the dialect makes the poem something of a *tour de force*.

The same can be said for Andrew Motion's 'This Is Your Subject Speaking' in **Natural**

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Causes. Like 'On Sizewell Beach' it is bound to become — indeed already *is* — one of the best known and best poems of the decade. Did Philip Larkin talk like that? Well, he does now; the poem is that definitive. Less definitive — intendedly so — is the delicately balanced poem with which the collection opens. 'The Dancing Hippo' manages the difficult feat of finding a tone in which to talk *about* — oh, *being* a poet, I suppose — though you don't *have* to read it like that; for the wry, comic, modestly affirmatory ending can be about any compulsion which outreaches the laws of means and ends.

Just space to welcome Simon Lapington's **Legend of True Labour** and to say that, although overloading anticipation doesn't help, and that the blurb ought therefore NOT to invoke the names of Hopkins and Lowell, Lapington writes well about engagements with the natural world and that, since these don't end with the eye, they therefore don't often degenerate into 'nature poetry'. □

PUBLISHING

Plain green wrappers

Oliver Harris

The Paris Olympia Press: An Annotated Bibliography
PATRICK J. KEARNEY *Black Spring Press* £19.95

SEX, OR MORE specifically attitudes to representations of sex, makes for strange bedfellows; like Norman Tebbit and Andrea Dworkin. When Mr Tebbit, ever the populist philistine, recently defended the man-in-the-pub's right to enjoy the pin-ups in the bonking-barmy *Sun* and *Star*, he did so by deriding the girlie paintings preferred by his 'social superiors, so called, and intellectual betters'. There was, pronounced the Chingford skinhead, no 'great difference' between them.

It cannot be denied — you can find as many tits in Tintoretto or Titian as on Page Three. Ms Dworkin, arguing from the point of view of radical feminism, rather than of harmless fun-for-the-boys, is in agreement; erotica is just a self-justifying liberal euphemism for elitist porn. In sumptuous *sub rosa* limited editions, the erotic was privileged pornography. The gutter, runs the argument, goes right through the gallery.

Leaving aside questions of porn as oppressive male-propaganda, and of the hypocrisy with which a spokesman for Victorian values can endorse *Star*birds, there are other important questions posed here: about an absolute standard of licence, or one dependent upon artistic merit; and, with the government about to introduce an Obscene Publications Bill, about literary censorship in general. Nabokov, in his postscript to *Lolita,* claimed that literary porn 'connotes mediocrity', its action reduced to 'the copulation of clichés'. Meanwhile Patrick Kearney, in a lively introduction to his *Annotated Bibliography* of The Olympia Press, which first published *Lolita*, points out that while the literary intelligentsia will 'troop into court like a flock of parrots and make about as much noise' to protect Important Books: 'Ask them to defend a work of "cheap pornography" and they melt away like the snows of spring.'

Was Judge Woolsey, who in 1933 exonerated *Ulysses* from being 'dirt-for-dirt's sake', right, and Judge Argylle who presided over the *OZ* trials in *1971*, wrong? Whatever happened to the certainties of the Swinging Sixties when the permissive crusade appeared to be a road both straight and true? When porn, as a protest movement, could be interpreted as both the logical expression of repressive puritan society and its antidote? When the question for Paul Goodman was 'not *whether* pornography, but the quality of pornography'? A chapter in that history, one of the most interesting and instructive, belongs to Maurice Girodias, 'a second-generation Anglo-French pornographer' whose Olympia Press published both the dirty and the arty.

Girodias' Olympia, founded in Paris in 1953, was modelled on his father's Obelisk Press, *père et fils* being responsible for playing vital roles in the careers of major writers that no one else would touch. Father, in the avant-garde climate of pre-war Paris, launched Henry Miller and Lawrence Durrell; son launched Burroughs and Donleavy as well as Nabokov in the 1950s. Claiming a visionary opportunism, Girodias saw his titles as prophetic works, publishing 'anything that shocks because it comes before its time, anything that is liable to be banned by the censors because they cannot accept its honesty'. But, if Girodias had the nerve and the eye to spring *Lolita* and *The Naked Lunch* on the world, and to publish the first English translations of Bataille and Sade, he also published dozens of porn potboilers, and refused to divide Olympia's imprints according to taste and merit. He put titles like *Sin for Breakfast* alongside Beckett's *Watt* under the plain green covers of his famous Travellers' Companion Series. 'The confusion,' he admits, 'was deliberate.'

Girodias' list constituted two movements in one: his 'd.b.'s' (dirty books) formed an 'erotic armada' written as 'an act of duty' in the fight against the Square Establishment; his arty ones challenged the hypocritical ethics of contemporary censorship laws. So, at the same time as publishing manuscripts of merit that were gathering dust, Girodias would reverse the process to raise cash. As he once admitted, he wrote blurbs for imaginary books, and when the orders came in for such titles as *There's a Whip in My Valise*, he would find authors to turn out something suitable.

But Girodias was ready to take real risks. Whereas Penguin, when they went to court over *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, had little to lose, Olympia, as a one-man-band shoe-string operation, did. 'Now that the great battle against literary censorship has been nearly completely won in Great Britain and the United States,' Girodias prefaced one of his Travellers' Companion titles in 1966, the very year that the French courts forced him and Olympia out of the country. If that battle has not yet been won, it is less because it has been lost than because the opposition has outflanked and divided itself. While the moral majority still righteously deletes the expletives and dreams of book bonfires, where are the rallying banners to replace those of Olympia? □

'And ever more came out of that same door wherein I went' . . .

This was the plaint of a man who could not escape the common round of conventional answers to his questions. Perhaps he was stuck in beliefs — maybe even sacred ones — but he was stuck. Is there no way out?

Perhaps; if you would like to see, write to:

The Blavatsky Trust (B)
P.O. Box 16, London W3 6HS

The lovely butcheress

Beata Duncan

Dear Cath, I am sitting by the fire
with my coat on,
drinking tea out of your mug,
have just seen
'The Spirit of Berlin in the Twenties'.
You said Richard Ziegler
would be worth a visit!

He painted women with high cheekbones
and big velvet eyes;
housewives with low hats and fur collars
(like that photo of gran
teaching mum to ride a bike),
prostitutes in scanty clothes.

The one that really got to me
is called 'Die schoene Metzgerin' —
the lovely butcheress:
a pantry with the carcass of a pig
and a stout young woman,
naked except for stockings and shoes,
her belly touching the pig's.

Her features are very fine,
straight nose, full lips, long lashes.
She is raising the penis from dead entrails
and touching it with the tip of a knife,
a look of utter contentment on her face —
or 'satisfaction' would be the better word.

The colours are mostly warm:
pink for the two bodies,
rich brown stockings and cottage loaf hair,
dabs of red for her mouth
and the pig's clotted blood.

But her heels are black and square
on chequered floor tiles,
the grey hooks through his trotters
tone in with her gleaming knife.

What is he saying in that painting?
I went back again and again —
what, for God's sake,
does that say about me!

The gallery was almost empty,
only an old man looking at the women,
and I didn't meet anyone
on my way home.

I bought a catalogue for you —
please come back soon!

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Euphemisms about abortion

Mary Kenny, London W11

I thought your leader on euphemisms very thoughtful (*NS* 23 Oct.). In researching the subject of abortion, I found the same disinclination to face the truth. The word 'baby' is never used by pregnancy counsellors or in an abortion clinic; it is always 'product of conception'. The word 'abortion' is never used to the client; 'procedure' is preferred. However repellent the operation becomes, and in late pregnancy it becomes very repellent indeed, there is a euphemism available to shield the operators and the polemicists from its reality. A perfectly formed child is still called 'a conceptus'. It is a fact that ordinary people do not shy away from such euphemisms quite so much; the common phrase for an abortion is 'getting rid of a baby', which has the robust ring of truth.

It is easier to broadcast any four-letter word on Channel Four than broadcast this particular truth. You may publish this letter, but I do not think you will wish to.

Green Thoughts

Stephen Moss, London SW19

The distinction Jane Dibblin draws (*NS* 23 Oct) between 'conservationists' and 'ecologists' is facile and the slighting reference to the World Wildlife Fund offensive. They are not merely 'concerned with preserving the status quo', but with defending species and habitats from what would otherwise be inevitable destruction at the hands of greedy, acquisitive and short-sighted human beings.

I trust the *New Statesman* is printed on recycled paper. I would hate to think that forests had fallen to make possible Ms Dibblin's rambling and wholly unhelpful exploration of subjects which will dominate the politics of the next century.

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CRECHE FACILITIES.....DISABLED ACCESS

Mike Malina, Co-Chair, Socialist Environment of Resources Association (SERA)

I was amazed that in covering the 'greening' of the Labour Party, no mention was made of SERA. For it is SERA that has had the biggest influence in setting environmental politics squarely on the agenda of the Trade Union and Labour Movements, since its formation in 1973, with its membership of Trade Unionists and environmental Socialists.

SERA is without doubt the largest *political* environmental group operating within any major British political party, and has demonstrated its influence in swinging the Labour Party to an anti-nuclear position at its conference in 1985, and was also responsible for a major input into drafting Labour's environmental policies, through the joint PLP/NEC Environment Committee.

Now, SERA is going a step further with its Parliamentary group made up of 25 MPs who are determined to give a higher profile and integration of Green issues throughout Labour's policies and to keep the idea of a Ministry for Environmental Protection, first proposed in 1981, at the top of the political agenda.

SERA can be contacted at 26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ. Telephone: 01-490 0240.

Dave Bradney, Brent Green Party, London NW6

If *NS* readers had to decide whether to turn Green on the basis of this article, no one could blame them for not bothering. Mainstream socialism and its clockwork twin marxism have only ever been about a bigger share of the 'cake' for the people that socialists and marxists claim to represent. Greens, on the other hand, are trying to get across the idea that the cake itself — physically, emotionally, culturally — contains slow-acting but lethal poison.

Green politics — unlike the politics of the old parties — is not predominantly electoral in character, but the Green Party does have a commitment to fight elections, for at least three reasons. First, to be honest, we do it to have the satisfaction of expressing our own ideas about what is politically important, rather than giving a much more grudging support to some other party which has tacked on a few environmental policies around its edges as a form of Green camouflage.

Second, we want to put our ideas directly to as many people as possible, at a time when they are predisposed to think about 'politics' and are in a position to appreciate just how different our policies are from all the other stuff.

Third, we aim to bring Green issues forcibly to the attention of conventional politicians, by the only realistic route available — by depriving them of votes. Green issues mainly involve a concern for the future of the planet over the next several decades and beyond, and taking away 'their' votes is the only way to bring such issues into view above the 4/5-year time horizon of the old parties.

Tim Brenan, Green Party Devon Co-ordinator, Exeter

Green politics and social justice are inseparable. If we wish to have a sustainable society that lives

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in peace with the planet rather than exploiting it and fouling it as fast as possible, then we must have a society that gives a decent living standard to all. Otherwise the pressure of poverty will be always there forcing our economy to grow. Poverty leads to environmental degradation and environmental wreckage leads to more poverty. It is this cycle that the Greens challenge. We have already made substantial inroads into people's opinions in this country — their votes will take a little longer!

M. Sands, Secretary, Whitstable Green Party, Kent

What a complacent cover headline! It implies that a crisis is a generation away, so little need be done now. For crying out loud! Bhopal, Chernobyl, pollution of the Rhine, the atmosphere disintegrating from the South Pole up. I notice that even on the clearest days the sun sets into smog above the horizon. The crisis is *now*!

Two things you need to know: UK's Green Party had formulated the Basic Income Scheme before the German Green Party was formed and if the Green Party is just a pressure group because it fights elections it can't win what does that make the Labour Party?

Peter Greig, London N22

Labour has either a green future or no future; green socialism offers Labour a viable and popular socialist vision clearly differentiated from Social Democracy Mark II or class struggle posturing. It rescues the Labour Party from the dead end into which it has manouvered itself, and re-emphasises all those things that socialism is meant to be about: internationalism, interdependence, individual liberation, useful work, socially useful production, breaking down and decentralising the state, the redistribution of wealth and income, and the understanding that socialism is a process and not an end state. All those looking for the 'big idea' to defeat Thatcherism need look no further.

More of the Lubbock debate

Robert Hewison, London EC4

The 'benumbing intellectual ambivalence about our heritage' which Jules Lubbock ascribes to Patrick Wright and myself (*NS* 23 Oct.), is surely to be found closer to home, in the pages of the *New Statesman*, which permits Jules Lubbock to misrepresent my arguments, without — as yet — publishing a review of the book in which I make my case for the 'alternative vision' Lubbock bleats about.

Two sentences in Patrick Wright's letter on this subject last week were run together making nonsense of them. We reprint them correctly below with apologies.

After 40 years of work focussed mainly on land and public access, the Trust becomes concerned with large country houses and is led by its art historians into promoting an ancestralised aesthetic which sets private aristocratic meaning off, against the values of public egalitarian reform. We can see it in the classical revivalism of an architect like Quinlan Terry, built as it is on a fundamental and precise rejection of the whole reforming project of the post-war years.

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BACKCHAT

INFRA DIG

Post-natal depression

Diana Eden

THIS WEEK, God help you all, I am a woman with a Message. I am going to fire a store of ammunition, steadily amassed for 20 years, upon that seemingly impregnable citadel, The Myth of Motherhood.

I write as one who has suffered, throughout life, from an affliction commonly called 'the innate maternal instinct'. The syndrome certainly exists. My recurring happiest dream, during the naïvity of rural childhood, was that of finding crops of babies — babies in the fields, babies under hedgerows, babies perched on haystacks — and all of them mine to keep. In my waking hours, no infant cousin, no mewling, puking child went uncosseted, unworshipped, uncoveted by me.

At the end of ecstatic afternoons spent perambulating a live dolly round the cobbled farmyard, I would tearfully relinquish my temporary, treasured trophy into the curiously reluctant arms of a newly wearied-looking aunt. How familiar was the inexplicable, wearied look to become. In adult life, a life laden with little else but pram-filled afternoons, that look stared back at me from every passing mirror.

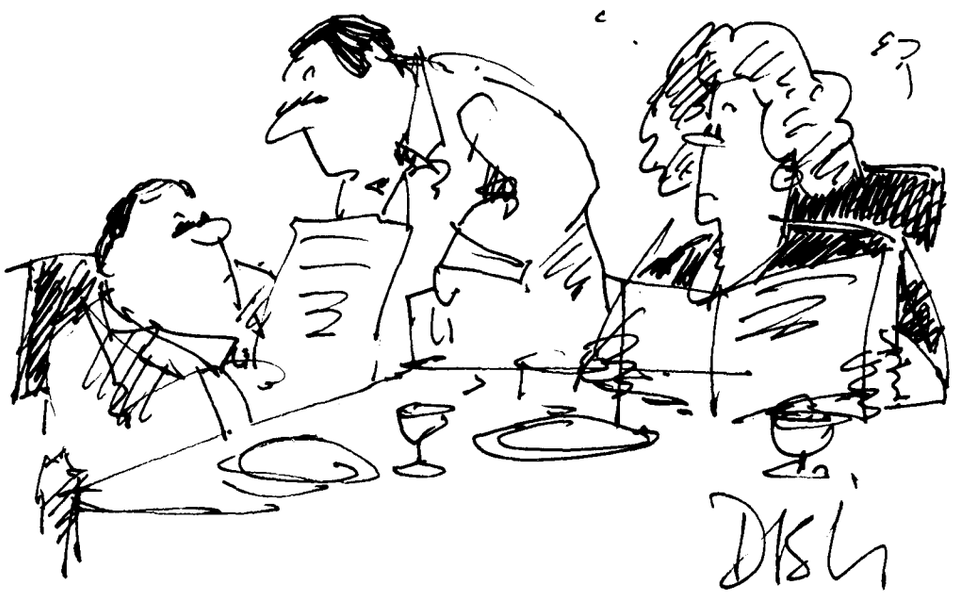
In brief, my message then, is this: nine tenths of motherhood is hell. Motherhood, my female friends (and, reality to the fore, I have neither the patience, space nor inclination to include fatherhood in these dismal considerations), motherhood is an ever stretching savana of tedium, guilt and stress, relieved only by briefly flowering moments of intensely heightened joy.

It remains, however, virtually impossible to take arms against a sea of media hype (quirky family sit-coms, chatty child-care books, scandalous commercials soft-focussing the sharp edges of toddler-devastated life) which, hourly, conspires to equate mothering with easy, automatic, guaranteed fulfilment. While disagreeing with every particle of David Alton's much debated bill, I share what I suspect is his unspoken, motivating premise: children *are* the Almighty's punishment for having sex. Babies are simply nature's way of telling us that heterosexuality is an unnatural act, carrying, as it can, a sentence of 18 years' hard labour.

Tragically, it is the economically and emotionally vulnerable who are most clobbered by maternity. Whatever the final upshot of the male and childless Alton's proposed impertinence, well-heeled women will continue to be able to choose whether to purchase an abortion or buy sanitised, post-natal varieties of termination via nannies, boarding-schools and train tickets for elongated holidays with Granny.

More tragic still is the number of accidental or even *planned* pregnancies among unemployed school-leavers — girls who picture motherhood as a rosy pathway to a purpose, as a means of obtaining a role, a focus, and a spurious sense of status to fill the lonely years that lie ahead. I wonder not that the statistics for child cruelty are so high; instead I marvel that, despite grossly uneven odds, so many mothers manage, for so long, to treat their charges with tenderness and care.

I have, in mid-life, enjoyable, good-natured, adult children. They have afforded me untold pleasure and heartache, companionship and isolation, and constant — and continuing — anxiety. For, if children are hostages to fortune, then mothers are emotionally hostage to the fortunes of their children — and release is achieved solely by easeful death □



'And for after-dinner chat could I suggest . . . insider dealing with a touch of SDP restructuring . . .'

FIRST PERSON

The disappeared

Simon Watney

FLYING BACK HOME from Boston recently I started to read Professor Robert Jay Lifton's monumental and profoundly disturbing study of *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (Basic Books, 1986). Lifton traces the absolute centrality of doctors in the theory and practice of 'medicalised killing' and shows how, for the Nazi doctors, psychoanalysis represented a particular threat — Freud's work being interpreted as a major instrument of sexual degeneration. It is one of the larger ironies of our times that this same grim and essentially vulgar rhetoric continues to dominate supposedly scientific attitudes towards the universal fact of human sexual diversity.

Coming back to England is always a dismal experience, but, this time, I was rather pleased to receive a call from Channel 4 asking if I should care to record a *Comment* piece. It was to be in response to an edition which had gone out while I was away.

What C4 had done had been to give *Comment* over to one Dr Ismond Rosen, a psychoanalyst and consultant psychiatrist at the Paddington Centre for Psychotherapy. Lurking behind the weary formula which calls for 'compassion' and 'tolerance', his message was plain: viewers were informed that the 'underlying causes' of homosexuality may 'also give rise to certain personality disorders' and that 'where the education system is being used to promote the idea that homosexuality is a normal and acceptable path of development' some adolescents 'could more easily be persuaded into eventually finding themselves in a burdensome lifestyle'. And so on and so forth, with a final plea that such burdened young people should have a right to corrective psychotherapy.

Dr Rosen is no doubt as horrified and appalled as all of us by the atrocities that the Nazis committed. He is of course no Nazi. But the rhetoric that he used had a worrying similarity to that used by the Nazi doctors. If being gay is ever 'burdensome' it is precisely because of the mischief and prejudice whipped up by people like him, and I could not help but be reminded of those doctors defining social democrats and socialists as 'personality disorders' with just the same calls for 'tolerance' as they signed them off to Auschwitz.

In my reply to Dr Rosen I pointed out that it is particularly regrettable that psychoanalysts, of all people, should so frequently be found siding with the team which regards homosexuality as some kind of universal threat, rather than an intrinsically unremarkable, even commonplace, fact of life. I also addressed the absurdity of the situation which guarantees that none of the official institutions of professional psychoanalysis in the West will accept lesbians or gay men to train as analysts. This in itself is a lamentably clear index of the measure to which the

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institution of psychoanalysis continues to regard homosexuality as an intrinsic problem.

I noted that 'one of the most moving aspects of Freud's career concerns his own struggle to accept and come to terms with the direct consequences of his own theoretical discoveries. For psychoanalysis it is the fixity of *any* sexual object-choice which requires explanation, not the object itself. Psychoanalysis is a method of psychological investigation which sets out to recover repressed sexual materials. Yet rarely have psychoanalysts turned their attention to the massive repression which it itself exhibits in relation to its own most fundamental insights'. As an Aids educator I am extremely aware of the danger as well as the psychotic stupidity of trying to expell the subject of homosexuality from the field of sex education. If we are to prepare children for the real world, we must somehow address the direct fact that lesbians and gay men constitute some ten to 20 per cent of the overall population, including teenagers.

I therefore felt perfectly justified in concluding that contemporary psychoanalytic training leads analysts 'to abuse the honorable concept of therapy, and to impose sadistic "treatments" on the very people whose lives they refuse to recognise as fully and ordinarily human. It is both salutary and chilling to compare the insultingly oversimplified rhetoric of "family life" and "family values" to the identical clichés found less than 50 years ago on the lips of the Nazi doctors as they stood on the ramp, directing millions to the ultimate "therapy" of the ovens. Whenever psychoanalysts speak of homosexuality as a "personality defect", or dismiss the systematically oppressed experience of gay teenagers and adults as a "burdensome lifestyle", as Dr Ismond Rosen saw fit to do on this programme last week, we may all be sure that we are listening down-wind from Belsen'. I had not wanted to mention him by name, since these are issues concerning institutions rather than individuals, but the producer had insisted for the sake of those who had not seen the original broadcast. He was very pleased with my piece. And so, I should add, was I. But, by the time I got home to Camden Town on the bus, a letter had been delivered by courier regretfully explaining that C4's lawyers had instructed that the entire *Comment* be pulled on the grounds of libel — and because he didn't like its 'tone'.

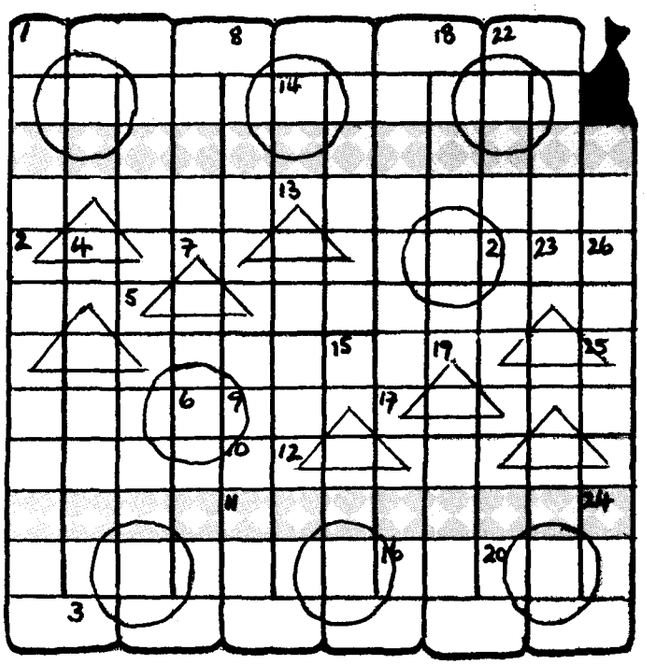
What is at stake here is not simply the failure of the Channel to honour its obligations, or even the perrenial problem of Access television. Right now, gay men are living through a major health catastrophe — HIV is killing *us*, in vast and almost entirely unrecorded numbers. The total failure of British society to respond to the terrible Aids pandemic, even in its local manifestations, is a devastating example of the level of barbarism to which this country has already sunk. I am more than weary of the spectacle of handsome young men smiling deferentially from my TV screen, engaging in polite if somewhat earnest conversation. It is time to get angry, and get organised. □

Salamanca 126

'It's A Cracker'

PRIZES: Copies of the *Collins Paperback English Reference Set* for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamance 126, New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ, by first post 30 November.

COLLINS DICTIONARIES



'Normal' & 'Banger' answers follow the winding of the cracker, up and down, beginning in their numbered squares, bangers exploding and entered as anagrams (real words) of the words clued. Pinwheels answers consist of eight letters and read clockwise or anticlockwise beginning in one of the squares marked; in both cases solvers must determine which answers belong where. Skyrockets go up (diagonally) beginning at their number (but the stick naturally comes down). Shaded areas provide the apt printed notice. (In fond memory of *ffancy*.)

NORMAL

1. Promises: e.g. IOU the Spanish fly (4)
3. Heck! A puzzle for police once (5)
5. Coastal place where you'd find adit? (8)
8. See it with traces of gleam perhaps (8)
15. Tree: an oakling's not lank and not at all right! (5)
18. Creek King (3)
19. Led with hoof dashing, being spritely (7)
20. Woes and ills lamented initially in this (4)
23. Silver mule approaching, say (9)
25. Punch: odd fellow (5)

BANGERS

2. Teg in lab makes this sound? (8)
4. One not exactly sure about good tip does this? (6)
7. Moony: one in god's grasp? (5)
11. Ploughed land's part of Tredegar Valley (5)
12. I hunted around for a helper? (5)
14. Pretentiously posh — Harrods? (4)
17. Gross, with front of stomach bulging? What you'd better do (— and how?) (4)
21. Stop worrying, packet-boat's gone (4)
22. A tree on mountain edge (5)
24. Grass cut, thereafter dead (3)

SKYROCKETS

5. A necessary wild nag? (7)
6. In error makes it (7)
9. This officer hits a Welshman (8)
10. Wild chap in riot needing penal reform (9)
13. A D—, say, in another form? (4)
15. Strong tobacco: take in load, possibly (7)
16. Trick style, old one (7)
26. One's wanted for use as a measuring device (8)

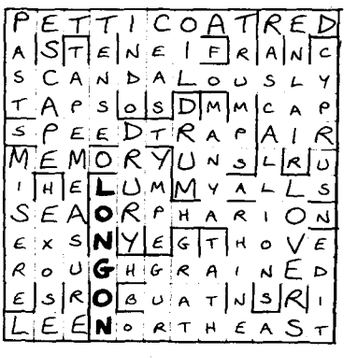
PINWHEELS (8 letters)

i) E.g. llamas, many in compounds, going about using bushes as cover ii) From falling out of tree got a sprained one? (two words) iii) Group of tiny creatures could have acarid in incorrectly iv) Has to bury? Obvious alternative used (no longer) v) Now this bags leading goose maybe vi) Run into red perhaps (with nothing, see, one's initial withdrawal to cover) vii) See two men holding a nasty one back (No sex, please, we've ———?) viii) We dread changes outside and, in short, couldn't concentrate

CONES (4 letters)

i) Sailors in poem, at first sign of crossbow, have regrets ii) Stiff angle shows talon once . . . iii) . . . force strikes wing: Albatross then ———? iv) Boat is one about to capsize v) Finished, being without energy: ———? vi) Height of room where one keeps books is short vii) *Tin in Italian has no reality* viii) Was street thief lacking outside bet to do this?

Solution to Salamanca 125



It's a long lane that has no turning: hence LONG + ON (no rev.): unclued lanes, Oildrum Lane is from Hancock's Half Hour, & Steptoe & Son.

Prizewinners to Salamanca 125

Mick Hodgkin (London SE17)
Ian McGivering (Ilkley, W. Yorks)
Neill & Jan Simpson (Ashton-under-Lyne)

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FOOD

Goldfish surprise

Colin Spencer

OXFORD HAS ALWAYS been rich not only in fine restaurants, but in down-market places where you can eat heartily. Cambridge less so, but the **Tai Cheun**, which opened there this year, has brought to the University the kind of Chinese restaurant — all stainless steel, marble and palm trees — which has become so popular in London.

It is run by Ursula and Terry — the essential Chinese element coming in the shape of the chef, Mr P. Pang — and has been packed out ever since it opened. The food is of high quality — steamed fresh scallops, minced prawns, crispy won ton, mange-tout in oyster sauce, sizzling King prawns with ginger, all perfectly cooked and spiced — but, alas, the portions are so mingy that we had to re-order and attack a Peking Duck, wafer thin pancakes and plum sauce. The coffee was absurdly expensive (£1 per person) and the After Eights dispensed with it struck the unfortunate note of a Berni Inn. The mixture of Chinese and Irish is rather endearing, however, and the undergraduates love it.

If travelling in Ireland itself, around the great beauty spots of the South West and, therefore, near the Ring of Kerry, halt for lunch in Killorglin where, at **The Bianconi**, you can eat a platter of smoked salmon which, I swear, weighs half a pound for the cost of £6. It comes with a mixed salad and homemade mayonnaise and the whole dish is worth writing home about.

The best Vietnamese restaurant I have yet come across in London is **Van Long** in Soho. Its specialities range from golden crispy fish with lemon grass to charcoal-grilled slices of garlicky pork and its seaweed starter is beautifully flavoured, with grated scallops. One of the most original dishes is deep-fried, crispy, stuffed squid; it arrives at the table sliced and looks like a savoury swiss roll. But I would travel across London for the prawns in garlic and black-bean sauce and that delicious Vietnamese salad of mixed vegetables and satay. Much of the cooking is lighter and more elegant than run-of-the-mill Chinese: a crab claw with gingery sauce has a flavour of rose water, while the four kinds of vegetables include such delicacies as wood-ear mushrooms, water chestnuts, bamboo shoots and young cobcorn. As well as the *à la carte*, they have set menus for two people at £11, £13 and £15 and an excellent lunch menu for one person at £5.95, which includes a choice of vegetarian dishes.

A fascinating restaurant is **Surinder's**, tucked away in the backwoods of Paddington. The chef is Indian but he cooks with great flair in an international style, albeit mostly influenced by Middle Eastern dishes. He has a set menu with a choice of five first and main courses and a choice of pudding or cheese for just under £11. It is excellent value. When I was there, we began with a timbale of crab and *calamari à la greque* (the squid was tender and drenched in a garlic-and-tomato sauce); we then had a fillet of fresh tunny which had been fried in olive oil and oregano. The chef had washed the raw fish under running cold water and thus, thankfully, it had lost most of the dark red blood that makes fresh tunny such a gamey fish — too strong, in that state, for my palate.

It was the fresh *porcini* in the window that drew us in to the **San Martino** in Walton Street. The waiters were much amused at this — the *porcini* (dried mushrooms), as they showed us, were plastic. However, fresh ones they did have and they were plainly cooked in butter and garlic and proved succulent and meaty at just over £6 (a few doors away, Ma Cuisine will charge anything up to £20). You could also have your porcini with pasta or grouse. This restaurant has been here for 30 years, serving Italian food in the midst of trendy Chelsea, and the quality of the food has not changed since it opened. What singles it out for special mention is that the bath in the ladies' loo is filled with goldfish. They are not for eating. □

Tai Cheun, 12 St Johns Street, Cambridge CB2 1TW; tel: 0223-358281/358287
The Bianconi, Killorglin, Ring of Kerry, Ireland; tel: 066-61146
Van Long, 40 Frith Street, London W1; tel: 01-439 1835
Surinder's, 109 Westbourne Park Road, London W2; tel: 01-229 8968
San Martino, 103 Walton Street, Chelsea, London SW3; tel: 01-589 1356/3833

Weekend competition

No 3000 **Set by Ms de Meaner**

This should really be credited to V.S. Pritchett — for yes, it was the Great Man himself who initially set it, in the issue of 5 May 1934 — but since his original text proudly offered a two-Guineas first prize and a half-Guinea second I've decided that, to prevent a mutiny, I'd better revise it a bit. The reason, of course, for this blast from the past is that — while Editors have come and gone (and come and gone and come and gone) — the Weekend Competition has survived to be 3000. And ideally I'd have re-set Comp no. 1, but it actually appeared in *Week-end Review* (of whose back copies not a trace can I find), which didn't amalgamate with the *Statesman* 'til 13 Jan 1934, by which time its Comp had already reached no. 200. But enough of the historical minutiae: Oedipus has just discovered that his name occurs many times in Freud's Lectures and brings an action in the English Courts for libel on the grounds of defamation of character. Write a summary of the final speech for the plaintiff in not more than 250 words. We offer prizes of £20 (no, your eyes don't deceive you) to the winners.

No 2997 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Final paragraphs from novels that would ensure that a browser wasn't tempted to go to the beginning.

Report **By Rosie Hughes**

Dear Ms de M has used so much space that I've only room to report that Babe B has been exiled for Disrespect to the Past and that Gray has *stormed* — I'm afraid that's the only way I can honestly describe his departure — back to the welcoming arms of Bulgaria. Ten pounds a head to the winners below and a Special Mention to Will Bellenger, whose final paragraph (which *seemed* to involve the decapitation of a church congregation by aliens) was far too intriguing for the competition's purpose.

Everybody took it in turns to point out the story to Dad — *even the Littlest One insisted on joining in.* 'So *all this* was going on unbeknownst to yours truly,' drawled Dad, as Mother got the table ready for the celebration meal of turkey and all the trimmings. 'Still, all's well that ends well. And next time I'm called away on urgent business, I'll take Aunty's feather hat with me!' And there wasn't anyone squashed round that little table (but who cared about the crush!) who disagreed with that.

MOIRA REDMOND

'My love, My own! My darling,' Grant Massingham's voice was eager, urgent and passionate. Fern felt his warm, gentle hands caressing her thighs. Doctors' hands were always so very sensitive.

'Be my wife as well as my Sister . . . if you know what I mean . . .' He had turned pink with embarrassment. Fern's silvery laugh tinkled over the begonias and azaleas. 'For a while, anyway . . . though, later . . . maybe the wife will be a mother . . .'

'Let's hope so. We must have patience . . . but then, we have patients now.'

Fern closed her eyes in ecstacy. To be marrying an Adonis with a sense of humour *and* an assured future. What else could any girl ask?'

MAUD GRACECHURCH

Cloud-tail leapt on to the uppermost branch and, majestically silhouetted against the deepening blue of the evening sky, nibbled a hazelnut. Then he spoke. 'We have come a long way, brethren. We have survived the rigours of the winter. We have escaped from the owl-wood. And, most important, we have outwitted our rapacious enemy the grey squirrel with his rat-like features and alien creed. For the moment we are safe. But make no mistake, new threats lie just over the horizon. Be vigilant! We must never rest until the beechwood is secure for generations of red squirrels to come!' And, cheering him wildly with excited squeaks, the little band scampered back to their dreys.

PETER NORMAN

Such, then, was the celebration of Spring! Vernal, lissom, dew-fresh, Cathleen danced on in the sempiternal sunlight (for never darkness fell in those climes). Onward she danced, past byre and cott, past cairn and ancient fountain, while from their curious haunts the fays, the ouphs and the dwarfish inhabitants of the valley watched with spell-bound eyes. Unbruised by stone or thorn her naked feet skipped through pastures and over purling streams. Cathleen. Dancing. Ever dancing in the once-for-always Spring. Let us leave her there.

C.J.D. DOYLE

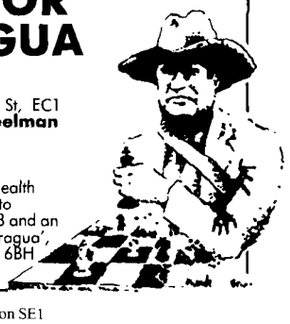
And so it was that at the ripe old age of five years, one month and 26 days, I started formal education — an interesting period of my life to be described in the third volume of my autobiography: *St Johns Infants — the First Two Years.*

DAVID ABENHEIMER

Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign

CHESS FOR NICARAGUA

Saturday 28 November
11am to 5pm
Chequer Centre, Chequer St, EC1
The grandmasters **Jon Speelman** and **Jonathan Mestel** will be taking on all comers in a **sponsored** event of simultaneous chess to send health supplies and work brigades to Nicaragua. To enter send £3 and an SAE to NSC 'Chess for Nicaragua', 23 Bevenden St, London N1 6BH (01-281 4359).



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Take me to your Leader
BY MOANIN MINNIE
MR PRESIDENT, THE WHOLE GALAXY IS WAITING FOR YOU TO TAKE MEASURES TO AVERT TOTAL FINANCIAL COLLAPSE. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS TO INSPIRE CONFIDENCE?
WELL, WHAT WE HAVE HERE AT THIS TIME... IS ER... A MARKET CRACK WITH... ER... RIPPLE EFFECT... I'M SURE THE... ER... THE UNDERLYING ECONOMY REMAINS KIND OF O.K.....
...YOU CAN REST ASSURED WE ARE ER... ER... DECISIVELY CONTEMPLATING OPTIONS
PSSST... MR PRESIDENT...
LIKE... ER INCREASING TAXES WITHOUT ER... RESORTING TO TAX INCREASES. YOU KNOW, NANCY ALWAY SAYS... ER... ER...
MR PRESIDENT— PLEASE FEEL FREE TO USE THE AUTOCUE PROVIDED BY YOUR ADVISERS
I AM, DAMMIT
JOHN MINNION

Chess

THE *INDEPENDENT* and *The Times* get top marks for keeping their readers informed about the world championship match in Seville. The *Guardian*, in wayward style, gives the opening moves of a game one day, and then forgets even to mention the result the next. In other respects coverage in Britain has been pathetic. What has happened to BBC-2's weekly report and Thames TV's late night bulletins of 1986? The bulk of what one hears about the world championship is anti-Karpov propaganda. Does Kasparov believe it himself? Or is he just exploiting the pro-Gorbachev theme Western media are tuned to? Only people whose acquaintance with international chess is limited to world championship matches could give any credence to such stuff. Between 1975 and 1985 Karpov was definitely the best player in the world — and, unlike previous champions, was ready to prove it in tournaments, against all rivals.

But Karpov is the underdog now. Or at least he was, until Kasparov started to show alarming signs of a loss of form, the main symptoms being time-trouble and inability to press home an advantage.

Karpov-Kasparov, Game 5, 23 October 1987, Grünfeld Defence.
1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. cxd5 Nxd5 5. e4 Nxc3 6. bxc3 Bg7 7. Bc4 c5 8. Ne2 Nc6 9. Be3 0-0 10. 0-0 Bg4 11. f3 Na5 Hundreds of players must have reached this position and wondered: 'Why can't I win a pawn with a *desperado* sacrifice of the Bishop on f7?' White can, but it's considered a feeble continuation because it weakens White's pawns, creates a hole on c4, and loses time. Karpov, of course, knows all this, yet mysteriously still plays it. **12. Bxf7+? Rxf7 13. fxg4 Rxf1+ 14. Kxf1 Qd6 15. e5 Qd5 16. Bf2 Rf8 17. Kg1 Bh6** If this was Karpov's 'secret weapon' against the Grünfeld, it's a dud. Black's initiative and light-square control (c4-d5-e4) count for more than White's extra, doubled g-pawn. But Kasparov, apparently shocked at the ex-champion's crass materialism, was spending too long over his moves. **18. h4 Qf7 19. Bg3 Be3+ 20. Kh2 Qc4 21. Rb1** But for a little tactic (21 . . . Qxa2? 22. Ra1), White would already be stuck for a useful move. **b6 22. Rb2 Qd5 23. Qd3 Nc4 24. Rb1** The Rook has to go here, since otherwise 24 . . . Nxe5! 25. Bxe5 Rf2 would win, whereas now Karpov has a defence in 26. Rg1. This also explains why the b-pawn is *taboo* next move. **b5 25. Kh3 a6** 25 . . . b4 26. cxb4 cxd4 27. Nc3 Qe6 comes strongly into consideration. But keeping the clamp on the position is also good and induces Karpov to return the pawn. **26. Ng1 cxd4 27. Nf3 Rd8 28. a4 dxc3 29. Qxc3 Qe6 30. Kh2 bxa4** Here 30 . . . Rd5! is strong. **31. Rb4 Nd2** Trappy (32. Qxe3? Nf1+), but the net effect of the last couple of moves is that Black has lost his outpost on c4, while White's Rook can defend his fragile K-side along the 4th rank. **32. Rxa4 Nf1+ 33. Kh3 Rd1** This may look like a forceful invasion, but in fact Black's pieces are in danger of being lost behind enemy lines. **34. Qc2 Rc1 35. Qe2 h5 36. Be1 Qd7?** This is where he should have played 36 . . . Ra1! forcing 37. Qc4 (37. Re4? hxg4+ 38. Rxg4 Ra4!) hxg4+ 38. Qxg4 Qxg4+ 39. Rxg4 Kf7 with advantage to Black, thanks to the a-pawn. **37. Qxa6 Ra1??** If the Black King were on h7 or g7 this would be a brilliant coup. With the King on g8 it's a ghastly blunder. **38 Qxg6+ 1-0.**

The next game, although he didn't lose it, was probably an even more dispiriting experience for Kasparov. The English Opening served him well and he got the sort of clear positional advantage that a GM would reckon to convert into a win 9 times out of 10. However, the world champion managed to squander this advantage with a few inept manoeuvres and was reduced to agreeing a draw before the 30th move.

So with a quarter of the match over Karpov was leading by 3½-2½, though he might well have been 1-5 down given the positions he was getting in the early middlegame. It's strange — how can Karpov hope to win if he plays unenterprising or inferior lines with White and fails to equalise with Black? Is it possible that, like Lasker, he is deliberately making second-rate moves (12. Bxf7+?) for psychological reasons?

On Saturday, 28 November, the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign will be holding a **Chess for Nicaragua** event. The star turn is a tandem simultaneous display by Jon Speelman and Jonathan Mestel, starting at 11am. Registration fee is £3 per board, but participants are also being asked to help by raising sponsorship. The target is £2 per move. That might be asking a lot in the case of solid players who grit their way to a long draw. If your friends are worried about how much they might be pledging, reassure them by promising you won't play a protracted game (risky gambit or timely resignation!). For further details about **Chess for Nicaragua** phone **Julian Turner, 01-281 4359**. The proceeds will go to a fund for health care. See you there, perhaps?

George Botterill

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This England

£3 Book Tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please.)

☐ She insists that their lifestyle has not changed. Apart from employing a nanny for one-year-old Natasha, her only concession to increased wealth is travelling first class and staying in five-star hotels. — *Observer Magazine* (Tim Lang)

☐ A nun was refused service at a roadside cafe because she pulled up on a motorbike. They said 'Sorry, we don't serve bikers,' Dominican Sister Catherine said yesterday. 'What did they think a middle-aged lady was going to do — take the place apart?'. — *Daily Mail* (Mrs M. Alexander)

☐ 12 litres of Dayville's ice-cream to R. M. Taber of Watford for his winning contribution to Dayville's quest for ice-creams that sum up the political flavour of our times. Taber plumped for the tasteful Maggie's True Blueberry for the Prime Minister ('marketed using the slogan "There is no alternative", and probably in portions each slightly smaller than the one before') and Uncle Neil's Welsh Compassion Fruit and Ginger for the leader of the opposition. — *The Times* (Leonard Cox)

☐ Some Londoners, it seems, have been thoroughly unnerved by the recent storms. A man has been spotted on Clapham Common, energetically fashioning a fallen tree-trunk into a dug-out canoe. — *Daily Telegraph* (James Scott)

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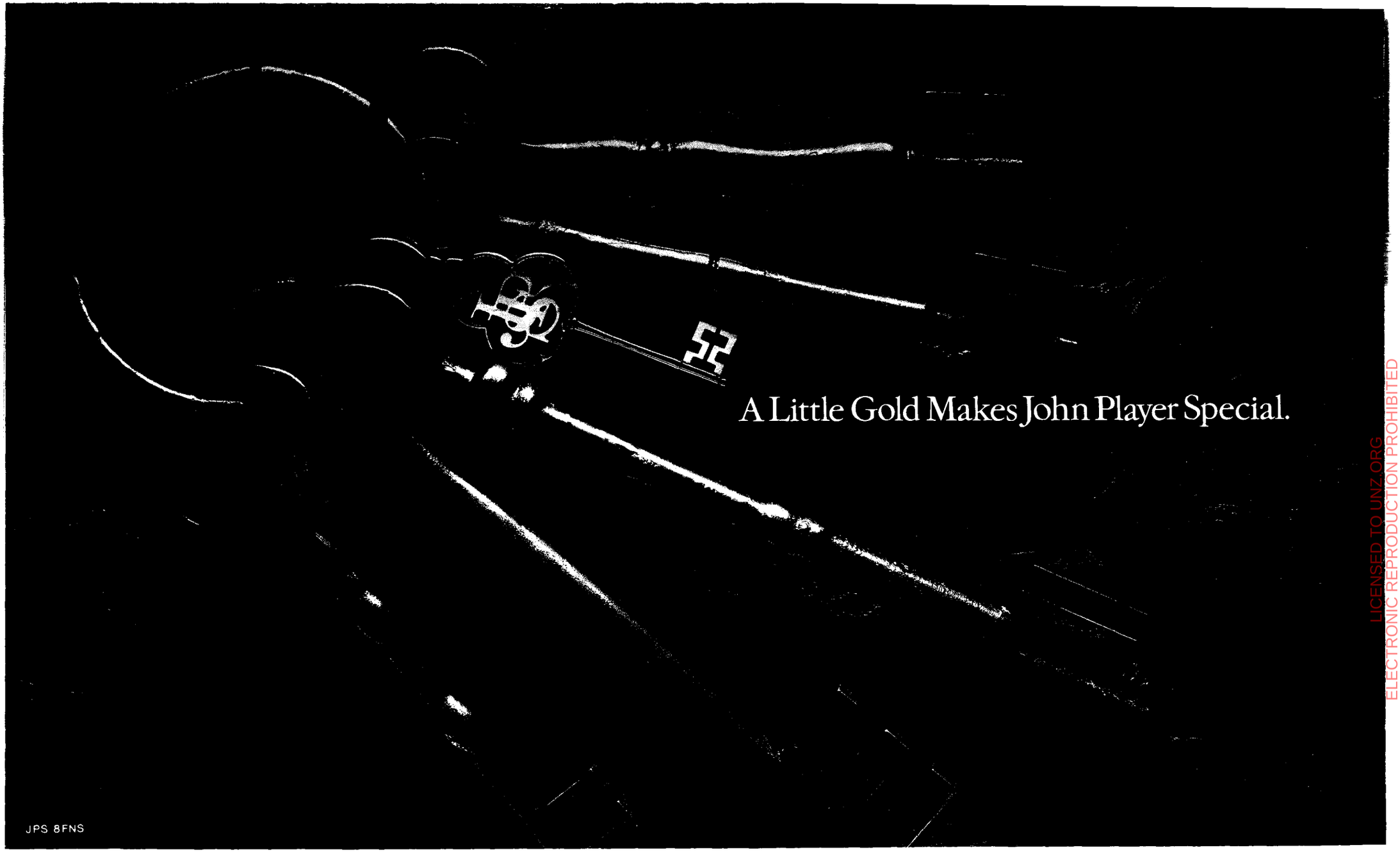

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Health Departments' Chief Medical Officers

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